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STUDIES IN CHAUCER

HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS

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IV.

THE WRITINGS OF CHAUCER

(Continued)

THE WRITINGS OF CHAUCER

II.

The Romance of the Rose

THE undisputed poetry of Chaucer is found, as the investigation in the previous part shows, to fall under twenty-six titles, and to embrace nearly thirty-five thousand lines—in precise figures thirty-four thousand, nine hundred and twenty-six.[1] This number will be increased by two hundred and thirty-one if we add the two doubtful pieces. But there remains still another work, the consideration of which has been designedly left to the last. It is the 'Romance of the Rose.' Obviously, this production stands on an entirely different footing from the others that have been subjected to examination and rejected. In favor of the view that these, or anything like them, were the composition of Chaucer, there has never been any direct evidence whatever. They were attributed to him, and printed among his works by his editors in the sixteenth century. But for so doing they gave no reason then, and none can be discovered now. Nor can much respect be paid to their critical authority, for, as we have seen, they included

[1] In this statement, the numbering of the Six-Text edition of the *Canterbury Tales* has been followed, which gives to that work 18,317 lines. In Tyrwhitt's edition the number given is 17,385; in Wright's, 17,368.

also in their collections a large number of pieces that are universally conceded to be spurious.

But that Chaucer translated the *Roman de la Rose* we have learned from his own words. His statement is repeated by Lydgate. In the ballade addressed to him by Eustache Deschamps, there is further direct testimony to his having rendered the French poem into English. Accordingly, there is not the slightest doubt that he produced a version of some sort. The controversy, in consequence, is limited to a single point. Did Chaucer make the translation that for centuries has gone under his name, the one that from the first folio of 1532 has been included in every edition of his complete works? Or has his translation disappeared entirely, and that of some other writer taken its place? The question is frequently spoken of in these latter days as a very simple one. We have almost been ordered to treat it as settled, as undeserving of the slightest further consideration. But though many profess to find it plain, and express unqualified disgust with those who persist in finding it perplexing, it can hardly be said as yet to have assumed the nature of a self-evident truth. It has, moreover, the ill-fortune to become more perplexing the more closely it is studied by one who enters upon the investigation without any bias in favor of a particular result. The examination of it can be carried on with comfort only by him who makes up his mind beforehand as to the genuineness or spuriousness of the work, and then reads it for arguments to sustain his conclusions.

For him who chooses any other course, it is certainly one of the last questions to be settled in an easy off-

hand manner. To pronounce a positive opinion about it would demand a more adequate examination of the subject than I have been able to give. To announce a decision upon it that would command universal assent would require, besides an intimate acquaintance with Chaucer's admittedly genuine writings, a fuller study of the original poem and of the English version, and a closer comparison of the two, than any one has yet thought it worth while, or found it possible, to bestow. In this place I shall content myself with setting before the reader the main arguments that have been, or can be, brought against or in favor of the translation as a production of Chaucer. Even before these can be satisfactorily set forth, certain preliminary statements must be made. Certain definite notions must be gained of the original French poem, and of the relation borne to it by the existing English version. These things are all the more important because varying assertions connected with the matter in dispute can be found in books of reference. This must be the excuse not only for repeating facts known to many, but of paying a deference to the devil of statistics which is somewhat out of place in a treatise that deals with the question mainly in its literary aspects.

The *Roman de la Rose* consists of more than 22,000 lines. The number cannot be given with absolute precision, because it varies somewhat in different manuscripts and therefore in different editions.[1] The poem

[1] According to their own respective numberings, Lantin de Dameray's edition of the *Roman de la Rose* contains 22,368 lines; that of Méon, 22,074; that of Michel, 22,817; and that of Marteau and Croissandeau (Orléans, 1878–80), the latest I have seen, 22,608. Whether these wide variations are due to differences of text or to errors in numbering could only be decided after a careful comparison. That of Marteau

was the composition of two authors, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung. The former flourished in the earlier half of the thirteenth century. Dying young, he left the work which he had begun far from complete. Forty years later, the latter, as he tells us himself, took up—perhaps about 1370—the unfinished production. Without paying too much heed to his predecessor's purpose or allegory, he proceeded to carry the work on after a fashion of his own. Instead of continuing it as a mystical romance of love, he made it the vehicle of conveying to the world the learning he had acquired, and the views he entertained upon the social, political, and religious topics that were then occupying the minds of men. His part in the poem is altogether more im-

and Croissandeau appears to differ from Méon's only by including the lines at the head of the sections, which summarize their contents. In the case of Michel's, in certain respects the most convenient of these editions, a gross error in numbering, it is well known, has been committed. Page 111 of volume i. begins with line 3376; page 112 begins with line 4008. Six hundred lines have consequently been dropped out of the reckoning. This would reduce the number of the lines in his edition to 22,217, if we assume that there are no other errors, which unfortunately there are. For instance, on page 103, what ought to be the seventh line from the top is missing. The English version is also wrongly numbered in the modern editions which are numbered at all. In Thynne's edition, and those immediately following—none of which were numbered—there were 7698 lines in this poem. In the transposition which was required to put the lines in their proper order, lines 7014 and 7160 of the early editions were dropped. The whole number consequently became 7696. But in Morris's edition (the first one to be numbered after Urry's), lines 4657 and 4658, consisting of questions and answers, were reckoned as four instead of two. Line 4664 was similarly counted as two. This added three lines to the numbering from that point on. The three were reduced subsequently to two in this edition, by the numbering 6370–6380, embracing eleven lines instead of ten. Consequently, Morris's edition, which has been followed by Gilman's, purports to contain 7698 lines instead of 7696. In examining the references in this work to the *Romance of the Rose*, these facts must be kept in mind; for the references are invariably made to the poem as correctly numbered. It is further to be observed that the title *Romance of the Rose* invariably refers here to the existing translation, and never to the French original.

portant as regards quantity than that of Guillaume de Lorris. Of the more than 22,000 lines of which the *Roman de la Rose* consists, its originator wrote but 4070. Consequently, more than 18,000 lines of it are the production of Jean de Meung. The quality is of even greater importance than the quantity. Allegory, which is rarely endurable for any one long to read, it was distasteful to the later poet to write. That characteristic of the work of Lorris, though it did not disappear, sank in the continuation into the background. In place of it came attacks upon the two favorite subjects of satire in the Middle Ages—the monastic orders and women—and views upon social questions, in which there is prominent a distinctly democratic feeling, and in truth occasional expressions of opinion that border closely upon communism.

So much for the French poem. The English version which has come down to us is far from being a complete translation. It is in truth a fragment, or rather two fragments. The more than 22,000 lines of the original are represented by precisely 7696. The translation has necessarily no ending. Moreover, it is not continuous. The 4070 lines of the part written by Guillaume de Lorris are rendered in 4432. The first 1206 lines of Jean de Meung's part, which immediately follow that of Lorris, are rendered by 1378. In this a gap exists, though not indicated in the printed editions. After line 4842 of the English version, more than one hundred lines of the French poem have been left untranslated, or the translation has been left uncopied. Then a much greater gap occurs. Between 5500 and 5600 lines—in precise

numbers 5544 lines—are passed over without the slightest notice. The English poem accordingly opens after the break with a passage for which the English reader has not the smallest previous preparation. From this point, however, it goes on connectedly, save for the failure to translate a few lines in two places, the omission of which must have been pretty certainly due to the scribe. Otherwise, the version is close. It includes 1854 lines of the French original. These are represented in English by 1886. The figures given are actually correct for the translation. They are substantially so for the French poem. In the case of the latter, however, variations will be found according to the editions used.

The English poem consequently consists of two parts. The one comprises 5810 lines, corresponding to the first 5276 lines of the original. The other is a fragment without beginning or end. It extends, as has been said, to 1886 lines. After it ceases, there still remain between nine and ten thousand lines which are left untranslated. Therefore, of the original 22,000 lines and more, about 15,000 do not make any appearance at all in the English version, at least in their proper order. This last modification is of some importance. There are a very few places in which the translation differs slightly from the original. There are a very few places in which it expands the idea without, however, altering its character. This is particularly true of the middle portion of the version. In a few places there are slight transpositions. Some of these variations may be due to the translator following a text which has been unknown to or disregarded by modern editors of the *Roman de la*

Rose. In one instance, certainly, we know this to be the case. Lines 6583–6594 of the English version are not found in printed texts of the original. They still exist, however, in certain manuscripts. But there are cases to which this explanation can hardly apply. Passages there are, and some of them of considerable length, that do not appear in the original at all. They do not appear, at least, in the place where we should expect to meet them. In one or two instances they have been traced to other parts of the poem, and perhaps they may be in most. This is particularly true of the celebrated passage about gentility not consisting in gentle blood. The view was taken by Marsh that Chaucer interpolated these particular lines as a protest against the assumption that villainous deeds are specially characteristic of the villein; that is, of the man of humble birth.[1] But all the inferences he drew are overthrown by the simple fact, first pointed out by Professor Child,[2] that the sentiments are not an addition of the translator, but are taken from another part of the original. Views of a similar nature are, indeed, to be found in many of the productions of the period. There is nothing remarkable about the fact. It is rarely in the history of any literature that its writers have been of high birth. The immense majority have always sprung from the middle or lower classes. These would naturally be unwilling to depreciate the men of their own station in life. In ad-

[1] *Origin and History of the English Language*, p. 408, 2d. ed., 1863.

[2] In a letter to the London *Athenæum*, which appeared in that periodical for December 3, 1870. The lines in the translation are based upon some found in the latter part of the original — lines 19,540–19,551 in Michel's edition, lines 18,806–18,817 in Méon's, and 19,301–19,328 in Marteau and Croissandeau's.

dition to this, they have never failed to have plenty of opportunities to observe that superiority of virtue is no necessary concomitant of superiority of position.

Whether the incompleteness of the translation be due to the scribe or to the translator himself, we have now no means of ascertaining with certainty, and probably never shall have. There are only two authorities for the text of the English version. They do not differ materially. The existence in them of the same corruptions make it reasonably certain that their origin is due directly or indirectly to a common source. One of these two authorities is the Chaucer folio of 1532, in which this particular production was originally printed. It remained the only text that was followed for centuries, though several slight changes, based either upon written copies or conjecture, were made in later reprints. It was not until the publication of Bell's edition, which appeared about 1856, that, for the first time, resort was had to the single manuscript of the poem which is known to exist. This is preserved in the library of the Hunterian Museum at Glasgow. It contains even less than the printed editions, owing to the fact that at some time several leaves had been cut out. For the lines lost in this manner, the edition of Thynne is, of course, the only original authority. In both these texts there was towards the end a transposition of the proper order of some of the verses. Tyrwhitt had pointed out this fact, and the correction was easily made by consulting the French poem. The version was a second time printed from the manuscript in the edition of Morris, which came out in 1866.

There are special difficulties connected with the in-

vestigation of this work. While some of them can and in time will be overcome, others will always continue to stand in the way of arriving at satisfactory results. In the first place, no exact reproduction of the only manuscript in existence has as yet been printed. From it, indeed, the poem, as it appears in the editions both of Bell and Morris, purports to have been taken. But they differ from each other in numerous places where no hint is given in either of variations from the original. These variations are rarely of importance. Still, the fact that they exist at all necessarily destroys confidence that in any given case we have before us the exact words of the manuscript. This, however, is a difficulty that can be, and is likely soon to be, remedied.

There is another obstacle that is far more serious. We have not the exact text as the translator wrote it, whether he were Chaucer or some one else. The English version is, as has been said, a fragment. It is not a fragment which is likely to have been left intentionally in the state in which it now appears. It has, indeed, been contended that the two portions of which the poem in its present form consists are the work of different hands.[1] In the lack of absolutely certain knowledge, we may feel perfect confidence that various and varying theories of this same general nature will long continue to be proposed, and to find adherents, as furnishing at last the solution of a problem which they really only tend to complicate. There is this justification for views of such a character, that there is every reason to suppose that the version, no matter how much of it was made, was

[1] By F. Lindner in *Englische Studien*, Band xi., s. 163.

composed at various times and possibly at intervals far apart. The translation of a work of over twenty-two thousand lines, or even of one third of it, is not in the nature of an instantaneous act. In the life of a busy man, such as was Chaucer, its production would have been likely to stretch over a long space of time. It would be taken up when opportunity permitted, and laid aside when necessity demanded. That there should, in consequence, be differences between various parts of it would not be surprising. That there should be inequalities in it would be almost inevitable. That in some places the rendering should be happier than in others, that in some places it should be closer than in others, is a characteristic it would share with all translations. Such results, indeed, depend very much both upon the nature of the particular material which is dealt with, and upon the temporary state of mind of the worker. Poets, like common mortals, and perhaps even more than they, have their seasons of depression and of exaltation. There are times when they write well and times when they write ill.

But, in spite of occasional variation in the character of the version, the work, as a whole, bears its own overwhelming testimony as to its having come but from one hand. To arrive at any other conclusion, one must fix his eyes so closely upon certain points of detail that he loses sight both of other details and of the general view. The arguments that have been adduced for a dual authorship are so far from convincing that they cannot even be called specious. One of the very strongest, for illustration, is that in the first fragment Bel-Acueil, a personified abstraction doing duty as one of the characters in

the poem, constantly retains its French form in the translation, whereas in the second it is constantly rendered by its English equivalent, Fair-Welcoming. It is gravely maintained that this establishes the strongest probability that the two parts were the work of different men. It is not easy to treat an argument of this sort respectfully. Sadly hampered would a poet be if he were not at liberty to use equivalent expressions, either when the necessities of the verse demanded it, or when, after using one form, he settled upon another that recommended itself for any reason to his taste. Let us apply for once this same method of reasoning to Chaucer's admittedly genuine work, and see where it would bring us. In the general Prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales' he speaks of the Reeve's horse as "all pomely grey." In the prologue to the 'Canon's Yeoman's Tale' the horse of the Canon who overtook the party is "all pomely grys." As if this were not enough, the steed that Sir Thopas bestrode was "all dapple gray." Here we have three ways of stating the same thing. Does any one seriously think of maintaining that these differences of phraseology suggest in the slightest degree difference of authorship?

Whether the great gap of several thousand lines between the two parts of this work may or may not have been due to the translator, there is no question that there exist certain deficiencies for which the scribe can justly be held responsible. The text in many places is in a bad state. In the matter of grammar it occasionally shows plain traces of modernization. The *it is I* of line 4365, instead of *it am I*, is a case in point. The use of the nominative *who* as a relative, in place of the regu-

lar *that* or *which* in line 4194, is suspicious, and suggestive of corruption. These are, however, the least serious of the alterations to which the text has been subjected. Much more often the metre is made halting, sometimes by the lack of words, sometimes by their excess. The meaning is not unfrequently perverted by what is plainly the most careless transcription. This is so manifest that in numerous instances the text can be corrected with little difficulty and with the slightest possible alteration. Thus, in line 2302 *pleyneth* should become *pleyeth*, in line 2336 *londes* should become *loves*, in line 2650 *whider* should become *weder*, and in line 4764 *he* should become *ne*. In line 3462 *at good mes* is plainly a blunder for *at goodnes*, that is, 'at advantage;' in line 5108 *herberedest* should take the place of *herberest hem*, and in line 5508 some such word as *jolitee* should be substituted for *flaterye*. How little, in truth, is necessary to be done in order to put an intelligible and perfectly satisfactory meaning in something that has no meaning at all we can see in line 6341, where *Abstinence and reyned* should read *Abstinence-constreyned;* in line 6542 where *or elles Goddis lyer* should be amended into *or elles God is lyer;* and in line 6354 where the words *take* and *lete* have been transposed with the result of giving the passage a meaning exactly opposite to its real one. These are a few out of scores and scores of illustrations that could be furnished of the comparative ease with which many places can be restored to their correct form. The French original in a large number of instances will enable the student to see clearly what the translation must have been. It will sometimes supply a necessary

word which has been dropped from the English version. It will at times supply the right word which has had its place taken by a wrong one closely resembling it. Still, with all the help it gives, there are lines that defy any ordinary metrical surgery, and some which fail to furnish sense. As if these things were not in themselves enough, the punctuation of the printed editions not unfrequently perverts the meaning.

These are drawbacks that interfere seriously with the satisfactory study of the poem. Yet, in spite of them, the translation, even as it stands, is a remarkable one. The excellence of its literary execution cannot be disputed. It is said by some to be superior to the original. Assertions of this kind are usually of little value. To pronounce an opinion of any weight in such a matter not only presupposes in its utterer the requisite taste and judgment, but requires also a familiarity with the two productions, and, in fact, with the two languages and literatures to which they belong, which it is the practice of many to assume, but the fortune of very few to possess. It is, in truth, the men who cannot really appreciate poetry in any one language that are generally most prone to discuss the comparative excellence of it as it appears in two. But one thing in particular can be safely asserted of this version. It is specially remarkable for its faithfulness. There is, perhaps, not another translation in our tongue, produced before the present century, which is so conspicuous for its close adherence to the original. For whole passages, line after line, will run along with almost perfect concurrence with the corresponding line in the French. This is especially notice-

able at the beginning and at the end. In the middle there is no such fidelity of rendering. Still, even there, while the divergence is more pronounced, it is not very pronounced in itself. Expansion is the besetting sin of poetic translation. From the dilution of thought implied in that process the 'Romance of the Rose' is extraordinarily free. Nor have higher things been sacrificed in order to secure literalness. The poem in this respect differs from many modern translations which are distinguished by the same peculiarity. The version, while a faithful one, is not a servile one. It came from a man who set out to give the sense, but did not feel himself under an absolute obligation to follow the phrase. Whoever wrote it had gained not only great mastery over the speech, but as great skill in the compression as in the expression of his ideas. While the rendering is unequal in parts, this much can be said of it as a whole: It is one of the few celebrated poems in the world's literature that have been transformed into another language without being deformed in the process.

The well-known scholar, the late Mr. Bradshaw, appears to have been the first to entertain doubts as to the genuineness of the 'Romance of the Rose' as a production of Chaucer. The conclusions he expressed on this point, however, down even to the close of his life, never partook of the positiveness of many who have disclaimed the right of the translation to be reckoned among the poet's works. They were marked by his usual cautious reserve in matters where certainty was unattainable. He did not insist absolutely upon the spuriousness of the poem. He merely maintained that

the burden of proof rested upon those who affirmed its genuineness and not upon those who denied it.[1] Mr. Bradshaw never published the reasons for the views he took. They were communicated privately to other scholars, as were the results of so many of his investigations. The objections against the genuineness of the work as a production of Chaucer have, however, been carefully brought together and ably presented by Professor Skeat.[2] They are essentially four in number. They relate to the ryme, to the grammar, to the dialect, and to the vocabulary.

Before taking up the consideration of these objections, it is advisable to pay some attention to one argument which has no proper place in this discussion, and could only have been introduced into it through inadvertence or misconception. It is the one which Professor Skeat calls the test depending upon the ryming of *here* and *there*. It is based upon the view that these two words are representative of two distinctive classes of sounds. This was put forth by Dr. Weymouth, in opposition to the view of Ellis in his work upon 'Early English Pronunciation.' It is here stated that the position of the former scholar was that Chaucer rymed "a certain set of words with the word *here*, and another set of words with the word *there*; and no word in one set ever rimes with a word in the other set." As to the truth or falsity of this assertion Professor Skeat does not commit himself. He merely maintains that no practice of

[1] *Memoir of Henry Bradshaw*, by G. W. Prothero, p. 353.

[2] No. xiv. of *Essays on Chaucer* (Chaucer Society), 1884; and also in Introduction to his edition of Chaucer's *Prioresses Tale, etc.*

this kind was observed in the 'Romance of the Rose.' "When we turn to the translation," he says, "we have a short and simple way of showing that the translator cared nothing whatever about any such distinction. In l. 663 he rimes *there* with *were* (verb); in l. 2977 he rimes *were* with *fere* (fear); and in l. 3843 he rimes *fere* with *here*. And there is an end of this test."

It is almost unnecessary to inform any one who has followed Dr. Weymouth's argument that his position is misunderstood and misstated in the extracts just cited. What he set out to show was that a distinction of sound between *here* and *there* existed in ancient times as there exists at present. His investigation, therefore, though it began with Chaucer, was not confined to that poet. It was essential to the strength of his reasoning that the same state of facts should be true generally of Early English productions. To have an exception furnished by the 'Romance of the Rose' would have been almost as fatal to his argument as to have it furnished by the 'Canterbury Tales.' That work was, consequently, included by him in his investigation. Nor did he take ground so utterly indefensible as that the words of the one class never rymed with the words of the other. His point was that such practices were exceptional. They were so exceptional as to make it evident that no perfect correspondence of sound was felt to exist between the words belonging to the two classes. They were therefore generally avoided as rymes. But they were not so invariably. The rule was no more strictly observed in their case than in that of several other classes of words which do not correspond perfectly in sound.

The usage of the 'Romance of the Rose' in this respect does not differ from the usage of Chaucer. It is not necessary to enter into details. The same short and simple way adopted by Mr. Skeat for the one will do for the other. In the 'Death of Blanche' the poet, in line 186, rymes *there* with *messagere;* in line 133 he rymes *messagere* with *nere;* and in line 450 he rymes *nere* with *here.* And there is an end of this argument.

We are now prepared to consider the tests that bear unmistakably upon the genuineness of the 'Romance of the Rose.' It is in some ways more convenient to take them up in a reverse order. This leads us at once to that of vocabulary. Mr. Skeat has not the slightest respect for it in theory. He distinctly asserts that he attaches to it small importance, and that he believes it to be frequently misleading and to be often misapplied. Still, he does not refuse to consider it, for the reason that there are persons with whom it carries weight. Accordingly he goes into it very fully, and apparently ends by being a good deal impressed by it. It occupies, perhaps unavoidably, more space than that given to all the other objections which have been brought forward by him against the genuineness of the work under consideration. To three facts in connection with it he calls especial attention. The first is that the translator and Chaucer use different forms of the same word. The second is that the translator and Chaucer use the same word in different senses. The third is that words occur in the translation which do not occur in the undisputed writings of Chaucer. Of the latter a partial list purports to be given. "I note a few of these," says Mr. Skeat. The number

specified by him is one hundred and ninety. He concedes that it may not be absolutely accurate, but any errors in it would not, he is confident, reach the proportion of five per cent. The result he regards as remarkable. A test which theoretically is of little value turns out in practice to be almost convincing.

The argument drawn from vocabulary occupies so much space on paper, and is so imposing by its length, if not by its weight, that it is desirable to dispose of it at the outset. For it is something more than inconclusive. It justifies the title of misleading which has been applied to it, for it has misled the very man who applied the epithet. It is misleading in the sense that it appears to have an importance of which it is utterly devoid. In the first place, the three facts to which attention has been specially called would be true of nearly all authors who have been remarkable for the number and extent of their productions. There are few, if any, of them that do not use different forms of the same word. There are few, if any, of them that do not use the same word in different senses. There are few, if any, of them that do not use words in some one piece that are not to be found elsewhere in their writings. This last is especially noticeable when the work in question is distinguished either by its length or by the peculiarity of its subject. Moreover, while these statements may be safely made in general about all poets, it can be shown that they are true of Chaucer in particular.

Before entering directly into the consideration of vocabulary, so far as it concerns this work, it is important to have the facts stated with precision. The list given

by Mr. Skeat is not absolutely accurate. One might also fairly feel justified in taking exception to the manner in which it is introduced. The impression is conveyed that but a small portion of the special vocabulary of the 'Romance of the Rose' has been included. There is an unfairness in this way of stating the facts which is doubtless unintentional, but is none the less unfortunate. So far from containing a few, the list contains the vast majority of words peculiar to this particular production. Some errors there are. Certain of the terms that are specified are found in Chaucer's unquestioned productions. The verb *groin* is one of the examples which Mr. Skeat is himself wisely disposed to throw out. *Acoye* (3564) is found in 'Troilus and Cressida.'[1] The adverb *agree*, 'in good part' (4349), is precisely the same as the Anglicized *in gree* which is found in line 42. In both cases it is joined with the verb *take*. The latter form occurs twice in 'Troilus and Cressida,'[2] once in the envoy to the 'Complaint of Venus,' once in the Man of Law's tale,[3] and once in the Clerk's tale.[4] In these instances it is joined with the verbs *receive* and *accept*, which give, of course, precisely the same meaning to the phrase as *take*. *Anoy* (4404) occurs in 'Troilus and Cressida,'[5] in the Parson's tale, and in the translation of Boethius. In these last two productions are found also several examples of forms of the verb *benim*, 'take away.' In the former it occurs seven times.[6] In the latter, moreover, is the very past participle *benomen* which is specially mentioned as peculiar to the

[1] v., 782.
[2] ii., 529, and iv., 321.
[3] Line 161.
[4] Line 1095.
[5] iv., 845.
[6] *Chaucer's Works* (ed. Gilman), vol. ii., pp. 166, 183, 194, 195, 196, 212.

'Romance of the Rose.' This is found twice in Prose iii. of the third book of the version of the 'Consolation of Philosophy.' *Batailed*, 'embattled,' is in the tale of the Nun's Priest.[1] *Espirituel* is found fourteen times in the Parson's tale.[2] *Haye*, a 'hedge,' occurs in 'Troilus and Cressida.'[3] In that same poem appears also the verb *lakke*, 'to blame.'[4] *Pouste*, 'power,' is in the translation of Boethius, as is also the adjective *preterit* in the sense of 'past.'[5] *Beau sir* is in the 'House of Fame.'[6]

In one or two cases there are slight variations in the meaning of the words as they occur in the different productions in which they are found. But they are no more than would naturally follow from the context in which they are employed. While some, again, that are given in Mr. Skeat's list do not appear in Chaucer's undisputed writings, yet in these writings do appear forms that are derived from the same root, though belonging to a different part of speech. This furnishes satisfactory evidence that the only reason that the very words in the list were not used by the poet was because there was no occasion to use them. The noun *behove* of the 'Romance of the Rose' is not in Chaucer; but the derived adjective *behovely* is.[7] The adverb *baggingly* does not occur outside of this same translation. But the verb *bagge*, from which it is taken, is in the 'Death of Blanche.'[8] A similar statement can

[1] Line 40.

[2] See Gilman's edition, vol. ii., pages 136, 163, 190, 226, 227, 229, 244, 263, 265, 269.

[3] iii., 351.

[4] i., 189.

[5] Book iv., prose v., and book v., prose 6.

[6] Line 643.

[7] *Troilus and Cressida*, ii., 261.

[8] Line 623.

be made in regard to compounds. It is surely most unreasonable to particularize words beginning with the prefix *un* as noticeable for not occurring in an author's writings, when the simple words without the prefix can be found in them. Chaucer uses, for instance, the adjective *godely*. Is it to be suspected that the *ungodely* of the 'Romance of the Rose' did not also exist in his vocabulary? *Maltalent*, 'ill-will,' 'resentment,' is another illustration. This word occurs three times in the translation of the *Roman de la Rose*.[1] In two of these instances it is a direct transferrence from the French. But while the compound does not appear in the recognized writings of Chaucer, the simple word *talent*, in the sense of 'inclination,' 'desire,' is found in 'Troilus and Cressida,'[2] in the 'Legend of Good Women,'[3] and also in the tale of Melibeus, and in the Parson's tale. *Trayshed*, 'betrayed,' is another one of the examples specified. But it can hardly be a different word from the verb *traysen* of 'Troilus and Cressida,'[4] and should, perhaps, have been included among those previously mentioned. There are, in addition, three errors in the list given which are due to defects of the manuscript. *Cherisaunce* should be *chevisaunce*, *minoress* should be *moveress*, and *soigne* should be *loigne*. The original settles the matter beyond dispute. The last two of these changes would not lower the number of peculiar words in the poem; but the first is a not uncommon word in Chaucer.

These corrections would reduce the number of one hundred and ninety words given by at least fourteen. To these must be added *quene* in the bad sense of

[1] Lines 273, 330, and 3438. [2] iii., 145. [3] Line 1771. [4] iv., 438.

'quean,' and the form *cowardise*, of both of which fuller mention will be made later. There are other words, too, which appear in this list that are of too doubtful a character to be cited. *Wirry*, of line 6264, put down with the meaning of 'worry,' is an example. The form just given is the way the verb is spelled in this place in the sixteenth-century editions. In modern ones, representing the manuscript, it is *wery*. But *wery* is found in other portions of the translation as a mere variant of *werreye*;[1] and *werreye* or *werye* occurs frequently in Chaucer. Under the circumstances, the word cannot be appealed to as furnishing evidence for difference of vocabulary. Analogy, again, will deprive some of the other examples of all their force. In the 'Romance of the Rose,' the French *printemps* has been rendered by *pryme temps*. But can this be considered as an objection to Chaucer's authorship of the translation, when in 'Troilus and Cressida'[2] we find him using such an expression as *at prime face?*

On the other hand, the list, though far completer than it purports to be, is not complete. The diminution due to errors of oversight is much more than counterbalanced by the fact that many words, occurring only in the 'Romance of the Rose,' have not been recorded. If my examination of its vocabulary be trustworthy—and it cannot be far out of the way—there are between forty and fifty terms that should be added to those given by Mr. Skeat. If we take into account the required omissions, this would make the whole number of words pe-

[1] For example, *werieth*, in line 3699, where it translates the French *guerroie*.

[2] iii. 919.

culiar to the poem range between 220 and 230.[1] To guard against possible error, let us assume that it reaches as high as 250. As the translation consists of about 7700 lines, we can therefore say that a word belonging specially to this production should occur in the proportion of one to nearly thirty-one lines. The list given, with its smaller number, strikes Professor Skeat as remarkable for its size. There are others, on the contrary, whom it will strike, even with its much larger number, as remarkable for its smallness.

There are several reasons for failing to be surprised at the number of terms contained exclusively in the 'Romance of the Rose.' The character of the poem, and the consequent character of the words found in it, must first be considered. The work is a translation. It is a translation remarkable for its faithfulness. The original which it reproduces dealt with a vast variety of topics, and dealt with them in a way that is unknown to the practice of Chaucer or of any other English poet. The French words were to be represented by words in our tongue that had precisely the same meaning. Some of them would naturally have no counterpart in our literary speech. They would, in consequence, have either to be carried over bodily, or our language would be searched for a peculiar or a dialectic word to denote the foreign object to be described, or the strange idea to be conveyed. If for any reason both these agencies

[1] Though the estimate cannot vary much from the actual number, it is necessarily a provisional one only. Until a concordance to Chaucer's works has been provided, it is always possible that words peculiar to the *Romance of the Rose* may have been overlooked, because they are now exceedingly common.

failed, an entirely new word would have to be coined by the translator. This, indeed, was sometimes done in order to reproduce with a little more closeness and vividness the meaning of the original. Thus, for illustration, *renardie*, of the French poem, is rendered in the English one by *foxerie*,[1] an equivalent created for this special purpose. Terms thus introduced into the speech would be little likely to occur in other works of the poet, because there was no meaning to be expressed which required their employment. Moreover, the necessities of the verse as well as of the version would compel the translator at times to have recourse to words and forms which, under ordinary circumstances, he might not find it expedient or think it desirable to use. All these different reasons would lead inevitably to peculiarities of language. All of them are exemplified in the translation. Many of the terms are exact transferrences of the French words. There was nothing in English to denote them; nothing, at least, that was fully satisfactory. They therefore had either to be left without any rendering, or rendered by a loose paraphrase, or boldly adopted in their original form. This last proceeding occasionally took place. More commonly, however, it was the verse that dictated the transferrence. The necessities of the ryme often demanded a special term which would probably have not been introduced had not the translator been aiming at the closest possible correspondence with his original. It is a noteworthy fact that, of the peculiar words found in the 'Romance of the Rose,' more than a hundred are trans-

[1] Line 6795.

ferred bodily from the corresponding words in the original, and of these fully forty were introduced for the sake of the ryme.

Here, then, we have two facts. A poem that touches upon trains of events and lines of thought that are at best merely glanced at in other writings of an author, must have, to some extent, a peculiar vocabulary. A close and literal rendering, if that were an object kept in view, would also necessitate the employment of many unusual terms. Both of these things were true of the translation of the *Roman de la Rose*. Would it therefore be surprising if the number of strange words in that production should be found to exceed, proportionally, that contained in any other single work of the poet? Ought this not to be the case? Would not the reasons given furnish a satisfactory explanation of such a state of things, even if we assume that it exists on a marked scale? But does it exist on a marked scale? Is the 'Romance of the Rose' especially peculiar in respect to its employment of a large number of unusual words? Let us test the value of this argument by applying it to certain of the undisputed works of Chaucer, which deal with subjects that require to some extent a special vocabulary. In the 7700 hundred lines of the work we are considering, there are assumed to be about 250 words not used elsewhere by the poet. This is in the ratio of one to about every thirty-one lines. Take, for comparison, the poem of Sir Thopas, which is essentially a satirical attack upon the mediæval tales of chivalry. It naturally was influenced by their vocabulary, just as the 'Romance of the Rose' was influenced by the vocabu-

lary of its original. In the tale of Sir Thopas there are 207 lines. To cast suspicion upon its genuineness there should be, according to the proposition just stated, about six or seven words not found elsewhere in Chaucer's writings. There are actually almost forty. Two or three, in addition, are used in senses different from those in which they are employed by him in his other productions. He who is surprised at the result of the examination of the vocabulary of the 'Romance of the Rose' ought therefore to be struck with at least five-fold astonishment at the result of the examination of that of the tale of Sir Thopas.[1]

There is, perhaps, a still more signal instance than this. It is the special vocabulary of the general Prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales.' As yet, no one has ventured to argue that this particular production is spurious, though it is merely a question of time when it will not be done by somebody, after there has once been paid to Chaucer an amount of attention, examination, criticism, guess, and crazy conjecture corresponding to what has been given to Shakspeare. There are in the prologue 858 lines. It is therefore entitled to about twenty-eight words not found elsewhere, if the argument under consideration has any real weight. There are more than five times that number. Some of them, also, are specially remarkable. If it be objected that both these pieces demand from their very nature a very peculiar vocabulary, let us apply this same process of rea-

[1] As it is not desirable to load the page with the evidence by which these and the following results have been reached, the details upon which the statements are based will be given in full in the Appendix at the end of this volume.

soning to another piece which resembles the 'Romance of the Rose,' in being a translation, or at least a paraphrase. It is the short poem termed the 'Former Age.' It is based on the fifth metre of the second book of Boethius on the 'Consolation of Philosophy.' It consists of but sixty-four lines. It is therefore entitled to about two peculiar words. It also has nearly five times that number. In fact, if this method of reasoning be followed to its legitimate conclusion, if it be accorded a weight in other productions which is ascribed to it in the case of the existing version of the *Roman de la Rose*, a process of elimination can be applied in succession to separate works of Chaucer, and it will not be a matter of extreme difficulty to establish satisfactorily that he did not write anything which he did write.

Equally futile are the two other facts to which attention has been drawn, that Chaucer and the translator use different forms of the same word, or use the same word in different senses. There is not in these facts the slightest proof of a difference of authorship. The former practice is followed by everybody who writes verse. The latter practice is followed by everybody who writes anything at all. In both cases plenty of illustrations can be found in the works of the poet himself. I throw out of consideration for the present dialectic forms, because they come up properly in the consideration of that particular test. One or two of the illustrations, moreover, upon which special stress is laid by Mr. Skeat are errors. The translator, he says, uses *haye* for Chaucer's *hedge*. But *haye*, as has been pointed out,

occurs in 'Troilus and Cressida.'[1] *Quene*, he tells us, in Chaucer means a 'queen'; but by the translator it is used in the bad sense of 'quean,' as it is in 'Piers Plowman.' The argument from this last example, assuming, as it practically does, that the same word could not be used by the same man in different senses, would be fallacious under any conditions. It is rendered more than fallacious in this particular instance by the fact that Chaucer does actually use *quene* in this bad sense in the prologue to the Manciple's tale.[2] *Elde*, in the 'Romance of the Rose,' is a verb meaning 'to make old;' in Chaucer, we are assured that it is only a substantive signifying 'old age.' But in the poet's translation of Boethius it also appears as a verb, though, it is to be added, in the intransitive sense of 'to become old.'

These corrections, however, are unimportant because the argument itself is utterly devoid of weight. The same statement is true of the use of different forms of the same word. As before, there are one or two errors in the list, upon which it is not worth while to dwell; for numerous instances can be found in Chaucer himself of his employment of two forms for the same word, or of forms of words with the same meaning closely resembling each other—a statement, indeed, that can be safely made of every poet, especially of every early poet. In the 'House of Fame' he uses *arrivage* in one place, in another *arrivaile*.[3] In the 'Legend of Good Women' he uses *obeysing*[4] as an adjective in the sense of 'obe-

[1] iii., 351.
[2] Line 18.
[3] Lines 223 and 451.
[4] Line 1266.

dient'; in the Clerk's tale he uses *obeisaunt*[1] in the same sense. In 'Troilus and Cressida' he describes wavy hair as *ounded*;[2] in the 'House of Fame' as *oundy*.[3] For the word *knee*, both that form and *know* occur several times. The same statement is true of both *nempne* and *neven*, meaning to 'name,' of *ivory* and *ivoire*, of *memory* and *memoire*, of *straw* and *stree*, of *tretys* and *tretee*, of *sacrifise* and *sacrifye*, of *injurye* and *injure*, and of numerous others. There is little to be gained by multiplying these illustrations. Even at the present day, every poet allows himself all the latitude possible in using variant forms of the same word, especially for the sake of the measure or of the ryme. Chaucer was not likely to differ in this respect from his successors. Indeed, the latitude conceded him was necessarily wider at a time when no tyrannical literary usage had grown up and established a particular form of the word, to which every one felt himself constrained to submit. Could we have had handed down the full practice of his age, we should, without doubt, be called upon to witness a wide divergence in cases where there is now absolute uniformity. Even with the limited literature that has descended to us, we are enabled to trace numerous variations. One of the very examples, in truth, which are furnished to prove the contrary establishes satisfactorily the futility of the argument that because Chaucer used in one place a certain form of a word, he was thereby debarred the privilege common to us all of using another form in another place. "For cowardice," writes Mr. Skeat, "we find *cowardise* (2490), riming with *dispise*." This

[1] Line 10. [2] iv., 736. [3] Line 1386.

is said of the 'Romance of the Rose.' "Chaucer," he adds, "has *cowardye*, C. T. 2732 (Tyrwhitt), riming with *vilanye*." There is no doubt of the existence of this latter form. But there is likewise no doubt of the fact that in 'Troilus and Cressida' the poet twice[1] uses *cowardice*, ryming it once with *emprise* and once with *rise*. Illustrations of this sort, which could be increased largely, are, however, of no value except as they establish the fact that they are themselves of no value in determining a question of authorship.

It need not be denied, indeed, that argument from vocabulary is entitled to a certain degree of consideration. Still, it is only in exceptional circumstances that much weight can be attached to the evidence it presents. It is unwarrantable in any case, to assume that an author's command of words is represented by those found in his writings. However large may be the number he puts in them, there will be a large number belonging to his special vocabulary which he will have no occasion to put in. Chaucer's knowledge of some of the words given as peculiar to the 'Romance of the Rose' would not be denied by any one; for in that case he would have to be supposed ignorant of what every one in his time knew. In addition, his writings frequently show that some of the more uncommon of these, which he never actually employs, must have been familiar, and have seemed unobjectionable. *Cotidien*, a medical term in the 'Romance of the Rose,' is a case in point. It is borrowed from the French, the line containing it—

[1] iv., 602; v., 412.

"Cotidien ne quarteyne—"[1]

being an almost literal translation of the corresponding one of the original.[2] It is included in the list which Mr. Skeat puts down as peculiar to this version. But if Chaucer could speak elsewhere, as he actually does, of a tertian fever,[3] it is absurd to suppose that he did not know what a quotidian fever was, or that he would have hesitated about using the term if there had been at any time the slightest reason for referring to the disease. In truth, the poet's ignorance of many of the words found in the 'Romance of the Rose' but not in his undisputed writings would be made still more aggravated by the fact that several of them occur in the work of his friend and contemporary Gower. The 'Confessio Amantis' has several terms that have not only been specially designated, but have the most reason to be specially designated, as characteristic of this translation. Among the most marked of the number are *avenaunt*, 'becoming'; *avaunt*, 'forward'; *baillie*, 'custody'; *customer*, 'accustomed'; *ramage*, 'wild'; *swire*, 'neck'; *tapinage*, 'lurking'; and *vecke*, 'old woman.'[4] It will hardly be maintained that Chaucer could not comprehend the language of his brother author, or that he looked upon it with disapproval.

So far, in truth, as value can be imputed to the test of vocabulary, it is not the use of even uncommon words that is of importance, but the use of common words in

[1] Line 2401.

[2] "Ne cotidianes, ne quartes."—*Roman de la Rose*, line 2291.

[3] Nun's Priest's tale, line 139.

[4] See for the words respectively vol. iii., p. 112; vol. i., p. 315; vol. i., p. 11, and often; vol. i., p. 224; vol. i., p. 361; vol. ii., p. 30; vol. ii., p. 187; and vol. i., p. 98 (ed. of Pauli).

an uncommon sense, or the exhibition of a fondness for the employment of special words or special phrases. These are peculiarities that deserve consideration. Yet in both cases the evidence furnished must be scrutinized carefully, and hesitatingly accepted. For in matters of this kind every author not only varies with himself—if the expression can be permitted—in works upon different subjects, but in works written at different periods of life. Take the case of the word *pure*, used as an adjective or adverb in the sense of 'very,' 'mere,' 'absolute.' It is found once in the Knight's tale as applied to fetters,[1] twice in the 'House of Fame,'[2] and three times in 'Troilus and Cressida.'[3] Nowhere else does Chaucer make use of it in this sense save in the 'Death of Blanche.' But in this short poem of little more than 1300 lines it occurs no less than nine times, while, in addition, the fuller corresponding adverbial form *purely* appears three times.[4] If the genuineness of the work were in dispute, we may be sure that the frequent recurrence of this term would play a part in the discussion, and would have been insisted upon as strong evidence that the piece was not the composition of the poet. Yet it proves nothing more than that at one period of his life Chaucer was disposed to employ a particular word very frequently, and that at a later period he was disposed to abandon its employment altogether.

It is not till we come to the consideration of dialect that we reach an argument that can be considered as

[1] Line 421. [2] Lines 280, 824.
[3] i., 285; ii., 656; iv., 1620.
[4] To these nine instances might be added two additional examples in lines 250 and 259, of the use of *pure* in this poem; but these approach nearer to the common modern usage of the word.

serious. It is certainly one of great importance. With reference to this very question, much stress has been laid upon the peculiar character of the translation of the *Roman de la Rose*. It has unmistakably a sprinkling of Northern words and forms. Moreover, these Northern forms are not due to the scribe. In no way could they have been introduced into the text by the transcription of the poem from one dialect into another. They are essential to the ryme. They must accordingly owe their existence to the translator himself. They are, consequently, looked upon by many as furnishing the strongest sort of evidence that Chaucer could not have been the author of this particular version. It was in the Midland dialect he wrote, and not in the Northern. Mr. Skeat gives examples of these words and forms. As stated by him, they include the use of present participles terminating in *-and* instead of *-ing;* of *fand* as a preterite instead of *fond;* of *teched* as a preterite instead of *taughte;* of *til* for *to* as a preposition; of the forms of certain words, such as *certis* for *certes*, and *fawe* for *fain;* of certain expressions such as *ado* for *to do*, and *to go one's gait* for *to go one's way;* and, lastly, the continual dropping of the final *e*, a well-known mark of the Northern idiom.

But there is evidence, perhaps, even more striking than can be drawn from the presence of forms like these in the text. Mr. Skeat points out that in the poem as it has been handed down there are rymes which are really not rymes, but become so the moment one of the words is changed into the Northern dialect. *Thore*,[1]

[1] Line 1853.

meaning 'there,' rymes once in this translation with *more*, and *more*[1] rymes with *are*. In the North these forms would be properly *thar*, *mar*, and *ar*. The correspondence of sound would accordingly be perfect. So also *hate* (hot), which in Chaucer would ordinarily be *hoot*, is found ryming with *state*.[2] "Again," continues Mr. Skeat, in a foot-note, "*I wote* rimes with *estate*, 5402; read *I wat*, *estat*, the Northumbrian forms. To give many such examples is surely needless; and it becomes tedious." This is hardly a fair treatment of the subject, suggesting as it does a great reserve of similar examples that have not been brought into play. The words of such a list would not be needless, as the evidence is by its very nature cumulative. Nor could the enumeration of them have possibly become tedious. There are not enough of them to effect that result. The only additional instances of the kind that the most diligent search can secure for this particular list of Northern forms are, *thare* ryming with the preterite *to-share*;[3] the preterite plural of the verb *to be*, thrice appearing as *ware* and once as *were*,[4] and ryming with *care*, *bare*, *spare*, and *forfare*; *lawe* (low) ryming with *drawe*,[5] and *brade*[6] (broad) ryming with *made*; *hatter*[7] (hotter) found in the middle of a line, and therefore uncertain; and *fore*, the past participle of *fare*, ryming with *more*, instead of the usual *fare*.[8] In this last case it is possible, and perhaps probable, that in the original copy the participial form was *fare*, and the adverb was *mare*. To these ought prob-

[1] Line 2215. [2] Lines 2397, 2398. [3] Lines, 1857, 1858. [4] Lines 506, 5458, 5637, 5777. [5] Lines 5045, 5046. [6] Lines 4199, 4200. [7] Line 2475. [8] Line 2710.

ably to be added *yyng*, 'young,' ryming with *mysseiyng*.[1] At any rate, Barbour uses this form to ryme with *kyng*.[2] The existence of such forms shows the influence of a dialect indeed; but it is very far from proving that it is a controlling influence, when we reflect that these illustrations are all that can be secured from seventy-seven hundred lines.

Still, these examples have been regarded as establishing beyond question the fact that this translation could not have been the work of Chaucer. The importance of the argument based upon them is certainly not underrated by its maker. "This test alone," says Mr. Skeat, "is decisive." It is hardly possible to state the matter more strongly. So positive an assertion renders it necessary, therefore, to examine the whole poem in the light of dialect; to consider not merely its relations to the Northern, but to the other two dialects used by the English-speaking people of the time; and to gain, by a survey of the whole field, a conception of the way its character was influenced by each as well as how much. Thus only shall we be in a position to measure the exact nature of the influence exerted over the translation by the Northern dialect. In this discussion peculiarities depending upon the dropping of the final *-e* will not be brought under consideration. They come up naturally with a certain class of ryming tests. Until those are reached the examination of them will be deferred. It is the employment of Northern words and forms that will be treated in detail at this point, after the whole ground has been gone over. The results of such a survey will

[1] Lines 2207, 2208.

[2] Barbour's *Bruce*, book xx., lines 137, 138.

hardly justify the use of decisive as applied to the test of dialect. It leads, in fact, to a conclusion altogether different from the one stated. The presence of the Northern forms of words, so far as it furnishes an argument at all, points, under the circumstances, to Chaucer as the author of this particular translation rather than to the contrary view. This is so opposed to the usual belief, and it sounds so paradoxical, that it will be expedient to go fully into the reasons for a statement that will at the outset, perhaps, strike many as particularly preposterous.

The translator of the *Roman de la Rose*, whoever he may have been, was a writer who pretty certainly spoke the Midland dialect from his birth. It is plainly the one which he was accustomed to use, and which in this version he did use. Upon this point there will be no difference of opinion. But, though the Midland dialect was doubtless his native one, he had evidently been exposed somewhat to the influence of the Southern. He employed forms peculiar to that section of the country, as, for that matter, did many of the men who were brought up on its border, and came necessarily in contact with its speakers. On several occasions he used inflections that are peculiarly Southern, not only as contrasted with the Northern, but with the Midland dialect itself. Thus we have *honden* for *hondes*, *Pharisen* for *Pharisees*, and *lambren* for *lambes*.[1] This last example, indeed, though doubtless genuine, cannot be deemed absolutely satisfactory, as it occurs in the middle of a line and not at its end. In the case of the verb we have plurals of the

[1] Lines 6665, 6893, and 7013.

present tense ending in *-th*—a distinctively Southern form—though, as in the case of *lambren*, the argument from them is impaired by the fact that nearly all of them occur in the middle of the line.[1] Still more remarkable, perhaps, is the use of the second person singular of the preterite of the strong verb, which in this poem often clung with genuine Southern tenacity to the original termination *-e*, and refused to discard it altogether or to replace it by *est*.[2] Even the full inflections of the preterite plural appear occasionally, though the Midland dialect was tending to discard them, and they do not occur with too great frequency in Chaucer himself. We have *liveden* and *loveden*, and the verse requires every syllable to be pronounced.[3] These are usages which a writer much under the influence of the Northern dialect either would not have known, or would not have followed if he had known. Moreover, to nearly all the grammatical peculiarities which the Midland shares in common with the dialect of the South the author of this translation adheres with almost invariable faithfulness. Of this there is one most conspicuous illustration which, on this particular point, has a right to be termed decisive. The third person singular of the present tense of the verb ends regularly in *-th*. As it appears in several instances at the end of the line, as well as often elsewhere, there can be no doubt that it was the termination which the writer was in the habit of employing.

[1] Lines 2790, 3951, 5781, 5810, 6543.

[2] Lines 2485, 2498, 2506, 4643, 4647, 5108, 7451, 7517.

[3] Lines 5702, 6568.

In truth, one derives at times from the perusal of this poem the impression that it was a place where the two extreme dialects of England had chosen to meet as a sort of neutral ground. For while the translator used ordinarily the Midland dialect, interspersed with occasional Southern forms, he is also familiar with that of the North. To it he has no hesitation in resorting, especially when the necessities of the ryme require it, though examples of its peculiarities, outside of the metrical ones to be considered later, are comparatively infrequent. For, while the translator is familiar with the Northern dialect, it is not one into the use of which he falls without forethought. If he puts it under contribution, he does not do so inadvertently, but consciously. The examples which are cited by Mr. Skeat settle this matter as well as the one for which he specifically cited them. In the course of his argument from dialect, he declares that certain forms of the present participle terminating in *-and* are due to the author and not to the transcriber. The fact cannot be successfully gainsaid, and he establishes it beyond question by the following illustrations. "As this is an important point," he writes, "I cite four lines, in full, properly spelt, omitting *be* in l. 2263:

> "'Poyntis and slevis wel sittand,
> Righte and streighte on the hand;' 2263.
>
> 'They shal hir tel how they thee fand,
> Curteys and wys, and wel doand.' 2707.

Change these into Chaucerian spelling, and we have *sittinge* riming with *hand;* and *fond* (not *fand*, see *fond* in

Glossary) riming with *doing*, which is absurd. The word *fand* is just as clear an indication of Northern dialect (to those who can see) as the use of the present participle in *and*."

All this is true. Yet it can also be termed misleading. As it appears here it is almost inevitable that the reader should receive from it a false impression. He can hardly fail to assume from what is said that there must be numerous instances in the poem of the employment by the translator of the present participle in *-and*, and that the existence of these forms is made absolutely unquestionable by the recurrence in the ryme of words requiring this termination. The truth is, however, that there are only two instances in the whole work in which this ending occurs under such conditions. These very two have been given in the lines just quoted. There are scores and scores of cases in which the participle in *-inge* of the Midland dialect is employed as a ryme. *Sittand* and *doand* represent the extent to which the necessities of the verse have forced the translator to make use of this particular grammatical peculiarity of the North. Moreover, elsewhere in the line than at the end this form is far from common. It is limited to the three cases of *lepande*, *criande*, and of *sparand*[1] used as an adjective. Consequently five examples, at most, exhaust the use of the participial termination *-and* in this poem of 7700 lines. Three of these are, from the nature of things, exposed to doubt. They could have been the work of the transcriber, though there is, perhaps, no ground for supposing that they were. It is certain, however, that

[1] Lines 1928, 3138, and 5363, respectively.

this ending does occasionally make its appearance in good manuscripts of Chaucer's writings, with which we have no reason to believe that a copyist from the North had anything to do. Thus in the Harleian manuscript we find a line in the Summoner's tale begins with the words "com lepande in."[1] In the second metre of the third book of Boethius one of the two manuscripts printed speaks of "the jangland brid that syngith on the heye braunches." Examples like these, which could be multiplied largely, prove nothing. In every instance there is always the possibility, and doubtless the probability, that the peculiar form was due to the transcriber and not to the author. Still, their occurrence makes it clear that there are but two instances of this particular participial form in the 'Romance of the Rose' from which any conclusion can be certainly drawn.

Remarks of the same character will justly apply to other illustrations that have been brought forward to prove the dialectic character of this poem. The argument is so stated as to lead the reader to believe that the exceptional practice is the one regularly employed. *Teched* does ryme once with *preched*,[2] and there happens to be no other instance in this translation of the use of the preterite of the former verb. But we have the preterite *betaughte*[3] of its compound, and the past participle—which appears several times—is invariably *taught*. Special attention has been called, as we have seen, to the use of the preterite *fand* instead of *fond*. It is undoubtedly a genuine specimen of the Northern dialect. But

[1] Line 457. [2] Lines 6679, 6680. [3] Line 4438.

no one would be likely to infer from the reference to it that has just been quoted that there is but one solitary instance in the 'Romance of the Rose' where this form appears. In all other places, when there is occasion to use it—and there is frequent occasion to use it—whether in the middle or at the end of a line, it is invariably *fond* that is employed and not *fand*.[1]

Til, the Scandinavian preposition for *to*, is not subjected to quite the same treatment. A cloud of suspicion is cast about it, however, as if it were a matter of extreme doubt that the form could ever have been used by Chaucer. This may be the truth; but no human being is in a position to assert that it is the truth. All the evidence that exists points to the exactly opposite conclusion. The difficulty of maintaining positively that the poet did employ it, arises from the fact that nowhere in his undisputed writings does it appear as a final ryme. Consequently, we are always at liberty to impute its introduction to the perversity of the scribe. It is, however, too frequent a form to be disposed of after this sweeping fashion. "Til," writes Mr. Skeat, "occurs as a rime to *wil* and *fil* thrice; see lines 4593, 4854, 5816. Now, although *til* is found in the MSS. of Chaucer A. 1478, it is of doubtful authenticity; if correct, it seems to have been used instead of *to* before a vowel, to avoid the hiatus. But in Northern works it is very common; and the use of it, as in the translation, *after its case*, is notable."

The line to which a reference is made in the passage just quoted is in the Knight's tale. In the seven rep-

[1] *Fond* occurs at the end of lines 167, 730, 3021, and 3808.

resentative manuscripts that have been printed, it reads as follows:

"And til a grove, faste ther besyde."

It is consequently no easy matter to maintain successfully a modern theory which is to cast discredit upon an ancient practice so strongly supported. Moreover, it is a natural inference from the comment upon the word that this is the single case of its occurrence in Chaucer's writings. It may be the only instance in which all manuscripts agree in the reading. There are plenty of places, however, where it can be found in many of them. This is true both of the 'Canterbury Tales' and of the other works of the poet. It is true, also, that it is generally in the very best manuscripts that the form occurs; so that there cannot be, in justice, reason to doubt that it was due to Chaucer himself. Nor is there any greater tendency towards its use by the translator than by the poet. In fact, the comparative infrequency of this Northern form shows that it was not one which the author of this version was ordinarily in the habit of using. *Til* in the sense of *to* occurs in the 'Romance of the Rose' in five places, two times in the middle of a line and three times at the end. To this it is to be added that the compound form *thertil* for *thereto* is found twice as a final ryme. Still, all these examples taken together—and five only are absolutely certain to have come from the writer—do not convey the idea of any special addiction to the use of the Scandinavian form. I confess, in conclusion, my utter inability to see anything notable in the fact that *til* in three instances follows its case. It is a device to which any poet would resort for the sake of ryme. To

it Chaucer himself did certainly resort in the case of several prepositions. The only thing notable about *til* in these three instances is, that it is placed at the end of the line for this very purpose of ryming. Whenever it was put there, it had almost necessarily to follow its case. The fact of position is of value, because it makes it certain that the word came from the author himself, and could not have been an alteration of the transcriber. In itself, however, it is of no importance. It is to be added that *til* is never used in the middle of a line in the 'Romance of the Rose,' unless the letter beginning the next word is a vowel or *h* mute. In this particular the practice of the translator agrees with the practice of Chaucer.[1]

The regular employment of Midland forms by the translator of the *Roman de la Rose* is, in fact, positive proof that his occasional employment of Northern ones was not so much an accidental as a deliberate act. Doubtless many of the words and idiomatic peculiarities had become so familiar to him that there was no consciousness on his part of anything objectionable or out

[1] *Til* in the sense of *to* occurs in the Ellesmere as well as other manuscripts in the general *Prologue*, line 180; in the *Knight's tale*, lines 274, 1204, and 2106; in the *Miller's tale*, lines 204 and 214; in the *Second Nun's tale*, lines 306 and 514; in the *Franklin's tale*, line 880, and doubtless in several other places. In *Troilus and Cressida* there is very good, and in most instances the very best, manuscript authority for it in i. 128, in ii. 1345 and 1353, and in iii. 1581. In the *House of Fame* it is found in line 1688. *Until* for *unto* is found in *Troilus and Cressida*, ii. 914. The form *til* occurs also in Gower, according to the edition of Pauli. See vol. i., pp. 111, 190; vol. iii., pp. 98, 204, 209.

Til in the middle of the line occurs in the *Romance of the Rose* in lines 1037, 1092; at the end in lines 3317, 4594, and 4852. In line 5814 (5816 Morris's edition) *til*, cited by Mr. Skeat, and upon which he lays special stress in his letter to the London *Academy*, July 9, 1890, is an error of the manuscript for *wille*, as the context, the French original, and the sixteenth-century editions all combine to show. *Thertil* is found in lines 3482, 4425. *Intil* is also found in line 624.

of the way in their use, if, indeed, there were such feeling on the part of anybody whatever. Still, it was ordinarily a resource to which he betook himself because it saved him trouble. It furnished him frequently convenient rymes. This makes all the more remarkable his abstention from using the termination of the third person singular in *-s* of the present tense of the verb, instead of the Midland *-th*. There must have been a constant temptation to use the former ending in a poem written in a language in which the plural of nouns ends regularly in *-s*. Yet in the employment of this most distinctive peculiarity of the Northern dialect the translator exhibits more self-restraint than Chaucer himself. The latter, as we have seen, has three examples of the use of the third person singular with this termination, and one, in addition, of the second person.[1] Less often does it appear in the 'Romance of the Rose.' In line 5419 we have *deles*, in line 5649 we have *reherses*. These are the two solitary instances occurring in this long work. They are enough to show that the writer was acquainted with the form ; they are likewise enough to show that he had no disposition to employ it frequently.

From this review we can feel justified in making certain assertions about the author of this particular translation of the *Roman de la Rose*. He was a man brought up in the Midland counties and on the borders of the Southern. During a portion of his life, however, he must have been exposed to the influence of the Northern dialect. He must have come to be familiar with its peculiarities, and inclined to introduce a few of them

[1] See vol. i., p. 387.

into his own speech. Do we know of any poet who fulfils all the conditions implied by this state of things? The answer is easy. There is to our knowledge one such man. That man is Chaucer. So far as we can be said to be acquainted with the details of his career, he satisfies every requirement that has just been specified. It can be regarded as almost certain that he was born and brought up in London on the very border of the Southern counties. A portion of his life was spent, however, in a district in which the Northern dialect was spoken. It was at Hatfield, in Yorkshire, that he resided for the most part of three years, and it may be for a much longer time. If he was born no earlier than 1340, he resided there at an age especially impressionable, so far as habits of speech are concerned. We must also keep out of our minds the ideas about language which are universally prevalent now. There was then no standard speech to which every one conformed who wished to be recognized as employing good English. No linguistic shibboleths existed at that time, or could exist. Prejudices there might be. Assertions about correct or incorrect usage may have been made, though none have been handed down. But these even now often do little more than reflect the practice of particular sections, or more often still the combined ignorance and self-assumption of particular persons. They are consequently without authority, and held in respect only by the half-educated. But at that time the influence of assertions of this kind would necessarily be much less. They could only be regarded as the opinions of the individual. They could have no weight outside of the deference paid to his knowledge

and judgment in such matters; and that could hardly extend beyond the circle of his immediate acquaintance.

Chaucer, therefore, if he lived for a period of years in a region where the Northern dialect was used, could hardly fail to have been affected by its peculiarities of vocabulary and grammar and pronunciation. He must have heard it spoken every day. His own expression would, for a time at least, be modified by it to some extent. That he became intimately acquainted with it there is no question. Of this the Reeve's tale, with its conversation of the two Cambridge students who came from a town "far in the North," furnishes of itself satisfactory proof. This, indeed, is one of the most convincing evidences, though it has never been noticed, that Geoffrey Chaucer of the Household Roll of Prince Lionel was Geoffrey Chaucer the poet. But there is evidence that bears directly on the matter in dispute. It is a legitimate question to ask if in his undisputed writings he shows either in grammar or vocabulary any trace of the influence of the Northern dialect. The answer to this is plain. He does show this influence unmistakably. His use of the third person singular in *-s* of the present tense, instances of which, taken from two of his admittedly genuine poems, have already been given, is a kind of testimony that can neither be gainsaid nor explained away. Moreover, in his special vocabulary we come across traces of the Northern dialect. One need not, indeed, lay too much stress upon this point. Northern words and forms were unquestionably then crossing into the counties below the Humber and the Trent. Gower, for example, is a writer who can be justly reck-

oned in many ways as much more Southern than Chaucer. His present participle, for illustration, ends in the Southern *ende*, instead of the Midland *inge*. But Gower uses the Northern *laverock* for *lark*,[1] a form which also occurs in the translation of the *Roman de la Rose*. He uses the Northern *kiste*, 'chest,' ryming with the preterite *wiste*.[2] The Northern plural *are* is also found not unfrequently in his work. Six times[3] it forms a line ryme, something which it never does in Chaucer's undisputed writings. Such a usage, indeed, appears but twice in the 'Romance of the Rose.'[4]

As appeals have, however, constantly been made to this argument from vocabulary to bolster up the attack upon Chaucer's possible authorship of this version, it is no more than proper to point out how easily it can be used to lend support to the defence. A number of terms are employed by the poet which, so far as they exist, show him to have been under the influence of the Northern dialect as conclusively as his tale of Sir Thopas shows that he had been reading the 'gestes' of chivalry. The word *lathe* for 'barn' is used by him twice. It occurs once in the Reeve's tale, where he is intentionally representing the speech of a Northern man, but once again in the 'House of Fame,' where he is speaking in his own person.[5] *List*, in the sense of 'the lobe of the ear,' is found in the prologue to the Wife of Bath's tale.[6] It is a North-country word, and was evidently not understood by all the scribes, for in some

[1] Vol. ii., p. 264 (Pauli).
[2] Vol. iii., p. 316.
[3] Vol. ii., pp. 56, 93, 193, 235, 271; vol. iii., p. 15.
[4] Lines 2216 and 6046.
[5] Line 2140.
[6] Line 634.

manuscripts its place has been taken by *fist*, a substitution which involved a change of the whole line. *Gaytres beryis* in the tale of the Nun's Priest[1] comes from the same quarter, at least if the old herbals are to be trusted.[2] *Lilt*, again, remains to this day a peculiarly Scotch word. It is found in the 'House of Fame,' in the phrase "lilting horn."[3] There also occurs *pel*, 'a stronghold,' 'a castle.'[4] It is used frequently by Barbour, and is a word that has belonged from an early period to the dialect of Scotland. In this same poem, moreover, one of Professor Skeat's happiest emendations is in line 1940, where the *hattes* of the manuscripts has been changed into *hottes*, the plural of *hot*, which means 'a basket to carry on the back.' The word remains to this day as one of those peculiar to the dialects of Northern England. The adverb *als*, in the modern sense of 'also,' is generally regarded as a Northern form. It is certainly common in the 'Bruce' of Barbour, while it is unknown to the 'Confessio Amantis' of Gower. It appears once in the 'Romance of the Rose,' ryming with the adjective *fals*.[5] It is likewise found three times in Chaucer, or at least but three times with any satisfactory authority in its favor—once in the 'House of Fame,' once in the Reeve's tale, and once in the Franklin's tale.[6] It may or may not be significant, but it is a fact that in each instance it is found, as in the 'Romance of the Rose,' at the end of a line, and ryming with this

[1] Line 145.

[2] "I heare they call this (the Cornel or Dog-berry tree) in the North parts of the Land the Gatter tree and the berries Gatter berries."—Parkinson's *Herbal*, 1640, p. 1521.

[3] Line 1223.

[4] Line 1310.

[5] Line 7443.

[6] Lines 2071, 397, and 870 respectively.

same adjective *fals*. *Casten*, furthermore, is the form of the past participle, which is found in three of the best manuscripts of the six-text edition of the 'Canterbury Tales,' in a line in the tale of the Prioress.[1] In modern editions it has been adopted into the text. Yet it, like the form *proven*, which has but lately come into wide use, had its origin in the North, and its employment was distinctive of that region. If *fawe* is, as Mr. Skeat asserts, a special Northern form which goes to show that Chaucer could not have been the author of this translation of the *Roman de la Rose*, its appearance involves the authenticity of more than this one poem. The word does occur, as he says, in the existing version, ryming with *sawe*, 'a saying.'[2] But in 'Troilus and Cressida' it is also found ryming with the past-participial forms *slawe* and *withdrawe*.[3] It occurs, moreover, in the prologue to the Wife of Bath's tale, ryming with *lawe*.[4] Must the genuineness of that most characteristic of Chaucer's works be therefore open to doubt?

No one will pretend to question the fact that Northern phrases and words and forms of words are found in the 'Romance of the Rose' which do not occur in Chaucer's undoubted writings. But they are few in number—so few that all have been or will be mentioned in the course of this discussion. So, also, there are Gallicisms in both. We should expect to find these appearing with comparative frequency in a translation taken directly from the French. Still, this is not the fact. They are proportionally no more numerous in the 'Romance of the Rose' than in the poet's admittedly

[1] Line 154. [2] Line 6476. [3] iv., 887. [4] Line 220.

genuine works. In neither case are there many. The most conspicuous instance in the translation is the phrase *maugre his* in the sense of 'against his will,' in lines 2386 and 5933. This is a direct transferrence from the French. In the second instance cited the original has the corresponding expression *maugré sien*, equivalent to *malgré lui*. That such an expression is found in Barbour, as it is several times, might be regarded as strengthening the argument against the genuineness of this version. But Gower also furnishes a specimen of a similar, or rather the same, phraseology in the lines,[1]

> "And God wot that is malgre min."
> "And malgre min so let it passe."

We can hardly insist, therefore, that there was special peculiarity of usage on the part of the translator in employing such an expression. On the other hand, Chaucer himself resorts to a most pronounced, and perhaps elsewhere unexampled, Gallicism in the 'Death of Blanche,' where we find the following line:

> "Whan I had wrong and she the right."[2]

There is one fact, furthermore, to be specially noted. There is not a single instance where a peculiarity of the Northern dialect is found in the 'Romance of the Rose' that the corresponding Midland expression is not also employed, and in nearly every instance far more generally. To the former the translator resorts merely for the sake of the metre or of the ryme. The occurrence of these words and phrases is exceptional and not regu-

[1] Vol. ii., pp. 3 and 374 (Pauli).

[2] Line 1282.

lar. An importance is therefore attached to this occasional usage to which it is in no way entitled. "For *to go one's way*," says Mr. Skeat, "we find *wente her gate* (common in the North), 3332. Chaucer would have said *wente her way;* see *to take our wey*, Prol. 33." Perhaps Chaucer would not have said *wente her gate*, and perhaps he would. There is no one living who is authorized to decide the point. Yet Gower, who was doubtless as particular as his contemporary, did employ the phrase *to go one's gate*.[1] Why should Chaucer have not done so likewise, if he had felt the necessity? There is no doubt that the translator resorted without scruple to the use of this noun. It appears in line 5230. In line 2158 also *othergate* is found in the sense of 'otherwise.' But the same word in the same sense is found in Gower.[2] But while the writer of this version had no hesitation about employing *to go one's gate*, he was just as fond of *to go one's way*. Both forms occur twice.[3] Attention is likewise called to *ado* in line 5080. It is described as being for *at do*, which is a well-known Northern idiom for *to do*. But the form is found in but this one instance.[4] It is necessarily open to suspicion, because it could easily have been due to the transcriber and not to the author. On the other hand, the form *to do* occurs regularly.[5]

But the most objectionable of these assertions is in regard to *certis*, which in line 5542 rymes with *is*. It is described as a Northern form for Chaucer's *certes*. Now, there is no question that in the poet's writings syllables

[1] Vol. iii., pp. 35 and 221 (Pauli).
[2] Vol. ii., p. 95.
[3] *Romance of the Rose*, lines 3332, 5167; 4666, 7416.
[4] In line 1655 we have in the text from the manuscript *to gone att see;* but the folio of 1532 has *to gon and see.*
[5] Lines 3047, 3411, 3886, 4650.

containing the vowel *i* ryme occasionally with syllables containing the vowel *e*. Instances in the case of the unaccented ones, such as *founde is* and *houndes*, are so exceedingly common that it is only necessary to mention the fact, though there are occasionally singular examples, such as *harmed* and *harm hid* in the 'Death of Blanche'[1] and *wounded* and *wounde hid* in the Man of Law's tale. But the same statement is true of accented syllables. They may, it is true, be disguised at times by the variation of spelling. In the 'Death of Blanche,' for example, we have *hed*, that is *hid*, ryming with *bed*.[2] But it sometimes happens that there is no variation in the spelling. In this same poem *blisse* rymes with *goddesse*.[3] In 'Troilus and Cressida' we have *fulfille* ryming with *telle*, *desire* with *manere*, the verb *wende* with *kynde* and *binde*, and the verb *yeden* with *ryden* and *abyden*.[4] Gower will furnish a number of similar illustrations. In the 'Confessio Amantis' the noun *minde* will be found ryming with the noun *ende* and the verb *wende* *Pit* rymes with the participles *let* and *set*, *hilles* with *elles*, *fled* with *hid*, *lesseth* with *misseth*, and the verb *kenne* with the noun *sin*, appearing in the form *senne*.[5] Several other instances of a like character could be given. The objection, therefore, to *certis* in the 'Romance of the Rose,' so far as there is an objection, is not to its spelling, but to its position and to the accent falling apparently on its final syllable. While in Chaucer's writings it is one of the most com-

[1] Lines 931, 932, and lines 4, 5 of the respective poems.

[2] Lines 175, 176.

[3] Lines 1039, 1040.

[4] iii., 510,511; iv., 818,819; iii., 1437, 1439, 1440; and ii., 933, 935, 938.

[5] See respectively in the *Confessio Amantis*, vol. ii., pp. 23, 67; vol. ii., pp. 293, 356; vol. iii., p. 125; vol. ii., p. 158; vol. ii., p. 169; vol. iii., p. 12; and vol. ii., p. 309.

mon of words, it is one of the most uncommon of circumstances to find it at the end of a line. In all of his undisputed writings it appears in that place but once.

It has been pointed out earlier in the chapter that the poet's use of the distinctive grammatical peculiarity of the Northern dialect which has been mentioned—the third person singular in *-s*—belongs to his earlier production as contrasted with his later. The examples of it occur, moreover, in the same kind of measure in which the 'Romance of the Rose' is composed. It is never once found in the works written in the seven-line stanza or in the heroic couplet. If we assume what everybody assumes—though it cannot be said that anybody really knows—that Chaucer's translation of the French poem was made in his youth, the argument in favor of his being the author of the particular translation handed down is made sensibly stronger. It would be in his earlier pieces that the peculiarities of speech prevailing in a region where he had spent part of his early life would be most likely to occur. These peculiarities, with continued residence at a later period in the South, he would come gradually to discard. For as time went on, the linguistic influence of that section would tend steadily to acquire more power over his own practice. A great literature was beginning to grow up in the speech it employed. It had, besides, the distinction of being used in the capital and at the court. There it had displaced, or was displacing, the French. All these circumstances would combine to give it an admitted superiority, to make it the standard of authority which all would feel obliged to recognize. To conform to its

special peculiarities would be the aim of every writer and speaker who was particular about his methods of expression. To write good English would come to mean writing in the Midland dialect. The degree of variation from it would be more and more narrowed. Chaucer himself would be affected by the very influences to which he had been one of the most efficient agents in imparting force. He would become scrupulous as to matters of detail about which he had previously been ignorant, or to which he had been indifferent. Liberties upon which he had occasionally been in the habit of venturing he would deny himself. Or rather it may be said that the increased power of expression he had gained would render it unnecessary for him to take advantage of licenses to which he had once felt the need of resorting. Peculiarities of the Northern speech would be regarded by him as improprieties, and would in consequence be deliberately abandoned. That they were abandoned by him is unquestionable. It is natural to suppose that it was for the reason just given. At any rate, it is only in this way that we can find a satisfactory explanation of the fact that thirty-three hundred lines, belonging to a comparatively early period in his poetic production, furnish but four indisputable instances of a Northern inflectional form, while more than thirty thousand lines, most of which was certainly written later, do not furnish a single example of its use.

The truth is, the test of dialect, pure and simple, so far from being decisive, breaks down the moment it is submitted to rigid examination. The argument from it can be made to bear as heavily on the one side as on

the other. But when we come to the tests of grammar and metre, we are upon entirely different ground. It is perhaps best to treat them both under the same head, because the grammatical tests laid down by Mr. Skeat are not strictly grammatical. They are essentially metrical ones, which rest upon the assumption that in Chaucer's genuine writings certain parts of the verb were never made to ryme with certain other parts. These have already been discussed in an earlier part of this chapter. Here, therefore, they will be considered as merely the grammatical branch of the metrical tests. To a later place will be left the examination of one or two points which bear directly upon grammar. These metrical tests arrange themselves accordingly under the following headings: 1. The ryming of *-y* with *-ye;* 2. The use of assonant rymes; 3. Strange rymes; and, lastly, 4. The grammatical use of final *e*.

Of these, the so-called *-ye -y* test takes precedence, because in Chaucer's works it is so generally observed, and in this version it is so frequently violated. In the 7700 lines of which the translation consists there are about forty-three instances of the ryming together of the words of these two groups, beginning with the *I* and *maladie* of lines 1849, 1850.[1] This is too large a number of exceptions to a general rule to make that rule of any importance. The argument based upon its violation is generally regarded as much the most serious one

[1] Most of these can be found in Professor Ten Brink's *Studien*, page 25. To the thirty-five in his list can be added *curtesie*, *gladly*, 2985, 2986; *foly*(*e*), *utterly*, 3171, 3172; *foly*(*e*), *hastily*, 3241, 3242; *hastily*, *foly*(*e*), 3289, 3290; *redily*, *maistrie*, 3293, 3294; *flaterie*, *utterly*, 3387, 3388; *worthy*, *drurie*, 5063, 5064; and finally *trecherie*, *folye*, 2537, 2538, where *folye* is not the noun *folly*, but the adverb *foully*.

that can be brought against Chaucer's authorship of the translation. There is good reason for this view. It has been pointed out previously that the poet's observance of the distinction between the two terminations is not so thorough-going as it has sometimes been maintained. But it is not the mere occurrence of rymes of the character indicated that imparts weight to the objection against the genuineness of the poem that is derived from this source. It is their frequency. One or two violations of the test might well be disregarded. They could be attributed with perfect fairness to haste or to carelessness, which led the writer to conform to a practice that was widely prevalent in his time, but which he, on the evidence of his other productions, almost invariably took pains to avoid. But the existence of more than two-score of variations from his established usage cannot be explained upon either of these grounds. They would show, if we assume the translation to be his work, that with him no such usage had been established at the time when it was made.

The next test is that of assonant rymes. Upon this point the utter disbelievers in the genuineness of this version take the strongest, though what seems untenable, ground. The use of assonances is not conceded to be found in even one or two instances in the poet's works. According to them, it is never found there at all. "I need hardly say," writes Mr. Skeat, "that no such rimes occur in Chaucer. But, in the translation, there are numerous examples which are quite decisive. Some are: *kepe, eke*, 2126; *shape, make*, 2260; *escape, make*, 2753; *take, scape*, 3165; *laste, to barste*, 3185."

One would hardly get the impression from the extract just quoted that in it are contained the majority of the numerous examples that are said to exist in the poem. Yet such is the fact. The number can be increased by *storm*, *corne*, 4343, 4344; *doun*, *tourne*, 5469, 5470; and *force*, *croce*, 6469, 6470. These, with the possible addition of *vice*, *wys* (5379, 5380), complete the entire list of examples. They are hardly entitled to the distinction of being termed numerous. On the other hand, that instances of assonant rymes occur in Chaucer the reader of the first part of the present chapter does not need to be told. Though they are few, they exist.[1]

The existence of strange and unusual rymes furnishes the next test. Of these there are in this translation a certain number. Still, owing to the fact that, with the exception of the 'Canterbury Tales,' no tabulated results have been published of the examination on this particular point of Chaucer's works, even if they have been reached, any consideration of rymes of this character must be provisional and subject to correction. Some there are which are certainly due to corruptions wrought by the copyists. It is to be kept in mind that we have as the only authorities for the text of the 'Romance of the Rose' a single manuscript, and the first printed edition, the folio of 1532, which represents another manuscript. Both are imperfect. Both are often in an unsatisfactory state as regards the form of words, and even the words themselves. Though there is in general a fairly close resemblance between the two authorities, the sixteenth-century edition will sometimes correct the

[1] See vol. i., page 394 ff.

manuscript, and the manuscript will correct the sixteenth-century edition. As an illustration of the former, *plesure* in line 4824 will take the place of *plesyng* as a ryme to *engendrure*. Again, in 6206, *begilen* will be substituted in a similar way for *bigyling* as a ryme to *kyllen*. So also *conveye*, in line 2916, becomes *convoye*, which is a form belonging to the Northern dialect and makes a perfect ryme to *joye*. *Loreyes* likewise is altered into *laureres*, *trist* into *trust*, and *blynde* into *blende*.[1]

Other instances could be added. The change, moreover, of the spelling of words as found in this translation to the spelling, or at least a spelling, that appears elsewhere in Chaucer will sometimes turn a peculiar ryme into a regular one. Thus all difficulty with *crown* and *person*[2] disappears the moment they receive the forms *coroun* and *persoun*.[3] The French text frequently enables us also to ascertain the form which the translator must have used, but for which was substituted by the scribe what had become the common form, or certainly the one which he himself was in the habit of employing. Thus, in the version as handed down we have *bothom* ryming with *salvacioun*, and the plural *bothoms* ryming in one place with *sesouns* and in another with *glotouns*.[4] In all these cases there is every reason to suppose that *botoun* or *botouns* was the form of the word as it came from the hands of the writer. It had so made its appearance in the language before the time

[1] Lines 1313, 2763, and 3954 respectively.

[2] Lines 3201, 3202.

[3] These words form rymes in Gower (ed. Pauli), vol. iii., pp. 112, 141, 227, 234.

[4] Lines 3473, 3474; 4011, 4012; and 4307, 4308.

that Chaucer flourished. It presents us in each case with an absolutely perfect ryme. It is likewise the form which is found throughout the French poem. Indeed, in the third instance given it rymes in it with *glotouns*, the two words having been directly transferred from the original to the translation.[1] So, again, in lines 3455 and 3456 we find *affeere* ryming with *debonaire*. But in this case the French text has *affaire*, as, it may be added, the early printed edition has. There is accordingly every reason to believe that *affaire* was the form used by the translator, in spite of the general assumption that this spelling did not show itself in the language until the sixteenth century. Considerations of this nature make clear how it was that several of these unusual rymes came into existence. They were due to the desire to transfer directly into English the very words of the original which terminate the lines. Thus *joynt* and *queynt*[2] reproduce the *jointes* and *cointes* of the French poem, and the *fresche* and *sarrazinische* of the same work are represented now in the translation by *fresh* and *sarlynysh*.[3]

Were the text of the 'Romance of the Rose' subjected to a careful examination and revision, many of the errors introduced by the copyists could be removed with little difficulty. With the accomplishment of that work would disappear most of the unusual rymes which do not originate from a violation of the other tests that have been or are to be mentioned. Several, also, that seem strange at first sight, will be found to be the same

[1] "El n'a mès garde que gloutons
Li emblent roses ne boutons."—Lines 3953, 3954.

[2] 2037, 2038.

[3] 1187, 1188.

as some that appear in the undoubted works of Chaucer, or not to differ from them essentially. Thus, in the 'Romance of the Rose,' *caught* rymes with *nought*.[1] In the 'Death of Blanche' we have the same word ryming with *thought*.[2] The unusual, even if unobjectionable, rymes occurring in the translation are often found to have exact counterparts in the undisputed poems. Thus, there is apt to be a sense of surprise in discovering in this version *wommen* ryming with *ten*. But in a precisely similar way in the Manciple's tale it rymes with *men*.[3] Indeed, many of the objections made to the rymes of the 'Romance of the Rose' are based upon theories of what Chaucer would or would not have done, where we have no actual knowledge to guide us, and sometimes, indeed, where we have. Mr. Skeat speaks of the carelessness of the translator in using *fier*, 'fire,' to ryme with *desire* in one place, where only four lines below he has the same word in the form *fere* to ryme with *nere*.[4] But if this be an evidence of carelessness, it is also an evidence of Chaucer's authorship of this version. It is precisely what he does himself, and it is not reasonable to expect that two different poets should exhibit the same sort of carelessness. In 'Troilus and Cressida' we have *fire* ryming with *desire*.[5] But we have it also in the form of *fere* ryming with *dere*, 'dear,' and *here*, 'hear.'[6] Both of these words form perfect rymes with *nere*. So, also, in the same poem we have *afire*, in the spelling *afere*, ryming with the verbs *stere* and *were*.[7]

[1] Lines 1533, 1534.
[2] Lines 837, 838.
[3] Line 6240; line 84.
[4] Lines 2467, 2468, and 2471, 2472.
[5] For example, ii., 1332, 1334.
[6] iii., 975, 977, 978.
[7] i., 226, 228, 229.

Again, fault is found with the translator for using *abstinence* in the form *abstinaunce* to ryme with *accordaunce*.[1] What, then, shall we say of Chaucer, who in the Monk's tale uses *recomende* to ryme with *ende*,[2] and in 'Troilus and Cressida' *recomaunde* to ryme with *demaunde*[3] and *comaunde?*[4] Once more, in the case of *neer* ryming with *riveer* in the 'Romance of the Rose,' we are told that we should expect *ny*. Why should we expect it? Certainly not on the score of ryme. *Neer* and *riveer* belong to the same class of words which are found regularly ryming with each other. These difficulties are, in truth, largely imaginary. Attention has already been called to several instances in which a final accented vowel syllable, containing regularly the vowel *e*, rymes with one containing the vowel *i*. It is under this head that a large proportion of the peculiar rymes of this version belong. With the exception of these, and of those that have already been specified, the only examples still remaining that present any difficulty are *aboute*, *swote* (1705, 1706); *annoy*, *awey* (2675, 2676); *lord*, *reward* (4639, 4640); and *pitaunces*, *equipolences* (7075, 7076). To this list a closer examination of the poem may possibly add a few more examples; it will not add many. The last one specified may, indeed, be thought to fall properly under the class of allowable rymes, a kind well known to all English poets, though it seems to have escaped completely the attention of those who deny the genuineness of the 'Romance of the Rose.'

Several of Chaucer's own rymes show, in truth, that his practice did not always attain to the standard set

[1] Lines 5847, 5848. [2] Lines 729, 731. [3] iv., 1693. [4] v., 1414.

up for him by metrical purists. In the Summoner's tale we have *thevys* ryming with *grief is*. This can be explained on the score of the constant interchanging of the letters *f* and *v;* but explanations of this kind to which the reasoner is obliged to resort do not tend to give the impression of acute metrical sensitiveness on the part of the poet. As a matter of fact, the difference in sound must have been annoying to some of the copyists. In two of the manuscripts, "what your grief is" has been altered into "what you greves." A more perfect ryme is secured by the change; but it involves the employment of a form of the verb then peculiar to the Northern dialect, and this Chaucer never adopted in his later work. Again, in the general Prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales' *saveth* rymes with *significavit*.[1] A variation from the normal spelling was made at times, and apparently for the sake of the ryme only. In the 'Death of Blanche' we find ryming with *bed* the form *cled*, instead of the regular form *clad*.[2] In 'Troilus and Cressida,' again, the word appears with the same vowel, ryming with *sped* and *bled*.[3] This is also true of the 'Romance of the Rose.' Gower, likewise, has some most pronounced instances of unusual rymes. He rymes the preterite *had* with *bed*, *leiser* with *desire*, and *dore*, 'a door,' with the verb *dare*, in the form *dore*.[4] Several more examples could easily be added to this list. There is, indeed, no proof of that spotless purity of ryming conduct on the part of these two poets which would have the inevitable result of putting the very greatest

[1] Lines 661, 662.
[2] Lines 251, 252.
[3] iii., 1521, 1523, 1524.
[4] *Confessio Amantis*, vol. i., p. 256; vol. ii., pp. 95, 242; vol. ii., p. 96 (Pauli).

of their successors to the blush. The assertion to this effect has neither the sanction of reason nor the authority of their practice. Its constant iteration accordingly becomes, in process of time, wearisome. It is plain from their own works that either great license was taken by them in the matter of allowable rymes, or wide variations of pronunciation existed and were recognized among the best speakers. There are, indeed, a considerable number of words in Chaucer that are spelled differently according to the ryme. The license extends, at times, to violent grammatical and verbal changes. If for this purpose the poet can employ without compunction or reproach the past participle *smitted* for *smitten*,[1] or the form *houn* for *hound*,[2] there is no occasion to be struck with horror by the peculiar rymes in the 'Romance of the Rose.' They can hardly be reckoned anything else than the liberties which a writer who has not as yet attained much mastery of the versification allows himself to take in cases of difficulty.

Assuredly, whatever may be the value we attach to this test, no one will question that in importance it falls far below the one that now comes up for consideration. This is the one which goes under the name of the grammatical test. In spite of being so called, it is not primarily grammatical, as has already been observed. It is really metrical, as much so as the one thus termed, though in each case the origin is different. It rests upon the theory that in Chaucer's unquestioned writings there were certain inflectional endings, now dis-

[1] *Troilus and Cressida*, v., 1545. [2] Ib., iv., 210.

carded from the language, which did not ryme with certain other endings. It is the presence or absence of the final *-e* that gives rise to the distinction. At the risk of repeating unnecessarily what has already been said, I venture to restate, though in a somewhat different form, the principle maintained to apply to these terminations in the case of the verb. The examples illustrating its employment may be classified under four heads. First, an infinitive or present tense, ending as it usually did in *-e*, such, for instance, as *honge*, 'hang,' could not ryme with the first or the third person singular of the preterite of a verb of the strong conjugation, such as *rong*, 'rang,' which never ended in *-e*. Nor, in the second place, for the same reason, could it ryme with a past participle of a verb of the weak conjugation. Thirdly, the preterite and the past participle of verbs of the weak conjugation could not ryme together, inasmuch as that would compel a form ending in *-de* or *-te*, to correspond in pronunciation to a form ending in *-d* or *-t*. Finally, the first and third persons singular of the preterite of a verb of the strong conjugation, always lacking the final *-e*, could not ryme with a preterite of a verb of the weak conjugation, always possessing it. These are the rules that have been described as absolutely inflexible. "In the translation," writes Mr. Skeat, "we find *to tel*, a gerund, riming with *bifel*, 3083; *set*, pp., riming with the gerund *to et* (to eat), 2755. I have written the preface to my Selections in vain if even the beginner cannot see that Chaucer would have written *tellë* in one place, and *etë* in the other, and would not have tolerated such rimes as these. I adduce no more

such instances, but there are, in the translations, *hundreds* of them."

I have discussed this very question in vain in the first part of the chapter[1] if the reader cannot see that Chaucer does occasionally tolerate rymes of the same character as these. In fact, toleration is altogether too weak a word for his practice. More than two dozen instances have been pointed out in his writings where violations of this so-called inviolable test unmistakably occur. With one exception, nothing has been more noticeable than the care with which any consideration of them has been avoided. The discussion of the question is made, however, more complicated in the case of rymes not conforming to the first of the rules specified by the fact that it is not always possible to tell with certainty whether an indicative or subjunctive form of the verb has been employed. The latter would be entitled to a final *-e*. This would make the ryme strictly regular. Thus, in the very illustration of *tel* and *bifel* which has been given, the lines containing the words read as follows:

> "Than wax I hardy for to telle
> To Bialacoil hou me bifelle."

If *bifelle* be deemed here a subjunctive—a common construction in Early English in cases of indirect question—the ryme is perfect grammatically, and therefore metrically. Under any circumstances, moreover, it offers no more conspicuous violation of this test than two passages from Chaucer's own writings. The first occurs in the

[1] Vol. i., p. 399 ff.

'Death of Blanche,' and reads as follows in Professor Skeat's edition of the 'Minor Poems:'

"But wherfor that I telle thee
Whan I first my lady sey?
I was right yong, (the) soth to sey."

Whatever may be the truth about the preterite *sey*, there is no doubt that in this extract the infinitive *sey* is fully entitled to a final *-e* which it has not received. The second passage is very much like the first, and appears in this way in the same edition:

"Her gilte heres with a golden threde
Y-bounden were, untressed as she lay,
And naked fro the breste unto the hede
Men might her see; and, sothly for to say,
The remenant was wel covered to my pay."

Here, as before, *say* is an infinitive form, and has been deprived of its final vowel.

Still, there can be no question that the 'Romance of the Rose' furnishes rather more examples proportionally of the disregard of this particular test than can be found in the admittedly genuine works of Chaucer. It is right, however, to protest against the exaggerated language with which the frequency of their occurrence is described. There are hundreds of instances in this translation, we are told. To make the expression more emphatic, the numeral is italicized. A careful examination of the poem will hardly justify this extreme form of statement. Of examples which fall under the first class —the ryming of infinitives and strong preterites—there are but three. One of them has just been quoted. The

others consist of the preterite *sey* with the infinitive *pleye*, and of the preterite *fond* with the infinitive *withstonde*.[1] There is, moreover, the same uncertainty about the mood in at least two of these instances as there was in the very similar instances cited from the 'Death of Blanche' and the 'Parliament of Fowls.' Cases of the second class—the ryming of the infinitive with the past participle of a verb of the weak conjugation—are more frequent. Yet of these it cannot be said that the number is very imposing. There are in all just seven examples. Four even of these are represented by two words.[2] Of preterites and past participles of weak verbs ryming together, but six instances occur.[3] Finally, to represent the fourth class, the preterite *bad* of the strong conjugation and *hadde* of the weak are the only words that appear, and they ryme together but once.[4] Chaucer's admittedly genuine works will show a greater number of illustrations of this last usage. It is obvious from the whole survey that the violations of this test have been exaggerated. The hundreds of instances have dwindled down to less than a score.

There still remain a few peculiar cases in which there cannot be the slightest question that it was never the

[1] Lines 3357, 3358, and 3807, 3808.

[2] The seven instances are *shette*, *knet*, 2091, 2092; *set*, *gete*, 2615, 2616, 4907, 4908, 5699, 5700, and 5745, 5746; *set*, *ete*, 2755, 2756; and *shent*, *repente*, 4545, 4546. In lines 3145 and 3146, where there is a ryme of *wite* and *quitte*, the latter seems rather an adjective than a past participle.

[3] The instances are *sighede*, *entriked*, 1641, 1642, where *sighede* should be *sikede*; *leevede*, *releeved*, 4535, 4536; *leyd*, *seide*, 4541, 4542; *wroughte*, *sought*, 4947, 4948; *hadde*, *bistad*, 5795, 5796; *recordede*, *accorded*, 5845, 5846. To these should probably be added *straughten* and *raughten* of lines 1021 and 1022. It cannot, however, be told positively whether the former is a preterite or a past participle. In any case, the final *n* should be dropped from both words.

[4] Lines 6653, 6654.

intention of the maker of this version to pronounce the final *-e* of the infinitive. In one way they are entirely distinct from any of the previous instances that have been mentioned. All the violations of the grammatical tests which have so far been recorded are supported somewhat by Chaucer's own example. His sins against metrical purity, if we choose to regard them as sins, may not have been so numerous as those committed by the translator. They were usually just as flagrant, however, when they did occur. But we come now to a few instances of rymes, connected with the use of the final *-e*, for which there is nothing corresponding in the undoubted productions of the poet. These consist in the ryming of the pronoun *it* with the verbs *sitte*, *flitte*, and *wite* in the infinitive or in the present tense. There are four instances in which this occurs.[1] It is certain from these that either the ancient ending of these verbs had been entirely discarded in the language of the writer of this version, or were employed or suppressed by him at pleasure. Other passages in the poem would lead to the conviction that the latter was the actual fact. There is nothing in Chaucer to countenance such a usage in the case of this pronoun.

There is, moreover, one additional and somewhat peculiar illustration of the neglect of the final *-e* by the translator. This, however, can appeal for support to the poet's own practice. It is where an infinitive whose full ending should be *-en* rymes with another infinitive which has no ending at all, but simply a stem terminat-

[1] These four instances are *wite*, *it*, *flitte*, *it*, 5359, 5360; *it*, *wite*, 5573, 2519, 2520; *it*, *sitte*, 3123, 3124; 5574.

ing in *-n*. An illustration of this can be seen in *sayn* and *attayn*[1] of the 'Romance of the Rose.' Here the full grammatical forms would be *sayen* and *attaynen*. Another example of this same kind of ryme is furnished by the infinitives *ben* and *sustene*.[2] Allied to these two is the ryming of the past participle *seen* with the subjunctive *wene*.[3] These are the only certain instances the poem presents of this marked metrical peculiarity. Still, there are similar ones in Chaucer. In the 'House of Fame,' for instance, the infinitive *demeine* is found ryming with *seyen*.[4] In 'Troilus and Cressida,' indeed, there are frequent examples of this very usage in the case of the latter verb. In its third book, for instance, the infinitive *say*, in the form *seyne*, can be found ryming with the infinitives *restreyne*, *reyne*, *feyne*, *distreyne*, and the present tense *compleyne*.[5] The suggestive fact about this peculiarity of ryme is that it is not found in the 'Canterbury Tales.' If it be contended that the usage is based upon the derivation of one of the forms from the Anglo-Saxon gerundial ending *-anne*, it is enough to reply that its occurrence in these cases is not borne out by the poet's practice elsewhere. At any rate, the same sort of defence will apply to the 'Romance of the Rose.'

There are, besides, a certain number of other rymes which might be held to sustain this view of the neglect of the infinitive terminations by the author of this version; but they are all of a more or less doubtful character, and no positive opinion can safely be pronounced in

[1] Lines 3677, 3678.
[2] Lines 5635, 5636.
[3] Lines 5671, 5672.
[4] Lines 959, 960.
[5] iii., 428, 430; 548, 551; 1156, 1158; 1528, 1530; and 1003, 1005.

the present state of our knowledge. Mr. Skeat, for example, points out as one illustration of the pervasive influence of the Northern dialect upon this translation that in it the plural *feet* rymes with the infinitive *lete*.[1] But the force of this example is altogether impaired by the fact that in the Man of Law's tale the same plural rymes with the infinitive *meete*.[2] He also brings forward[3] as an objection to the genuineness of the version that it rymes *entent* with the predicate adjective *present*.[4] As usual, we are told that Chaucer would have had *entente*. What business had he, then, to use *entent* in the Man of Law's tale to ryme with the past participle *shent?*[5] The truth is, that as yet the last word has been far from spoken as to the use of the final *-e*. A much fuller examination than has as yet been attempted must be made before any hard-and-fast rules can be laid down for our acceptance. When, indeed, we find so many variations in the poet's own usage, several of which have not been pointed out; when we find a writer so particular as Gower ryming the preposition *for* with the past participle *forlore;*[6] when we find Chaucer himself ryming *nought*, when the subject of a verb, with the preterite form *broughte*,[7] we need not be utterly overwhelmed by the departures from common practice that can be discovered in the 'Romance of the Rose.'

There is one more grammatical test, however, which has the further distinction of being purely grammatical. It does not concern itself with the ryme. This is the

[1] Lines 1981, 1982.
[2] Lines 1003, 1006.
[3] Letter in the London *Academy* of July 19, 1890.
[4] Lines 5869, 5870.
[5] Lines 832, 833.
[6] Vol. ii., p. 239 (Pauli).
[7] *Franklin's tale*, lines 545, 546.

employment of the verb *do*, not in the causative sense of 'make,' but in its modern usage as a simple auxiliary. In discussing the genuineness of the 'Court of Love,' I called attention to the fact that the latter usage is something that can hardly be said to be known to Chaucer.[1] In several instances where it appears in the sixteenth-century folios, and even in Tyrwhitt's edition, it is noticeable that the manuscripts, at least the better manuscripts, furnish a different reading of the line. Two or three examples will make the point plain. In the poem of 'Anelida and Arcite,' line 138 in the early editions reads as follows:

"When he was absent, prively doth she wepe."

The best manuscripts, however, read,

"When he was absent, prevely she weep."

In the 'House of Fame' the folio of 1532 and its successors have

"Hercules,
That with a sherte his lyfe did lees."

Here in the Fairfax manuscript the last line reads,

"That with a shert hys lyfe les."

Line 2484 of the 'Legend of Good Women' is found as follows in the first printed edition:

"Alas, as the storie doth us recorde."

A comparison of the manuscripts shows that the proper reading is,

"Alas, that as the stories us recorde."

[1] See vol. i., p. 499 ff.

In the Knight's tale, line 52 appears in Tyrwhitt's version,

"Do telle me, if that it may be amended."

Here all the manuscripts rightly agree in substituting *and* for *do*.

These instances could be multiplied largely. They almost necessitate the conviction that the use of *do* anywhere in Chaucer's writings in the so-called emphatic conjugation is suspicious, and wherever found is at once suggestive of corruption of the text. But in the 'Romance of the Rose' we are confronted with examples of it, where it seems impossible to take any other view than that it must have been the work of the translator of the version, and not an alteration due to the most depraved of copyists. When lines occur like these,

"But al his lyf he doth so morne," 4917;

"So litel while it doth endure," 5025,

there seems no way of escape from this conclusion. In most cases, indeed, the verb *do*, when joined with an infinitive, has its causal sense in the 'Romance of the Rose.' It has it, in fact, sometimes when we might suppose it to exemplify the modern usage, were it not for the authority of the original text.[1] But there are lines, such as those just cited, where no other employment of it can well be understood than that which prevails at present. In all there must be nearly a dozen of these instances, if we assume that the existing text has undergone no altera-

[1] Examples of this can be seen in lines 607, 609, 3162, and 7592, where the French text shows that the causal sense is the one in which the word is used.

tion from its original form.[1] It is hardly necessary to say that this is a most significant deviation from Chaucer's practice. I am not aware that much, if indeed that any, attention has been called to it previously. To my own mind it presents the strongest evidence against the genuineness of this version of the *Roman de la Rose* that can be adduced; at least against its genuineness in the form in which it has been handed down.

After the survey which has just been made of the metrical and grammatical tests, the most ardent advocate of Chaucer's authorship of this particular translation cannot well refrain from conceding that the result of the examination of them is, on the whole, distinctly unfavorable to the side he takes. This is true even if several of the arguments adduced are far from having the weight with which they have been often credited. It is not that violations of these tests are unexampled in the poet's undisputed writings. What is unexampled is the scale on which they exist. The question is, therefore, not so much one of kind as of degree. Instances do occur in his writings of *-ye -y* rymes, of assonant rymes, of parts of speech which end in *-e* ryming with parts of speech that have strictly no such termination. But, except in the last case, they are beggarly in number. Their infrequency shows that the poet was, as a general rule, careful to avoid them, even when the practice of employ-

[1] Fairly certain illustrations of the auxiliary use of the present *do*, besides the two given above, can be seen in lines 2287, 2446, 2697, 2797; and of its preterite *did* in lines 1912, 3107, and 5157. There are several other lines in which it is hardly possible to decide with certainty which sense of the word was the one intended. In line 6538 the sixteenth-century editions have a *doth* which is not found in the single existing manuscript.

ing them was common in his day and had been common before. It is, therefore, their comparative abundance in the 'Romance of the Rose' that casts discredit upon the genuineness of that work. In this matter there can be no doubt that it exhibits unmistakably the influence of the Northern dialect. This even then displayed in its literature most of the characteristics of versification and grammar which have been described. One only way is there, in consequence, by which the argument thereby made against the authenticity of the poem can be directly met. To it attention has already been called. The believer in Chaucer's authorship of the translation must be forced to assume that it was the work of his early life; that a portion of his youth was spent in the North, where he heard constantly its dialect used; that when he began to write he was largely influenced by his familiarity with the speech of that region, which had long gone beyond the speech of the Midland and the South in divesting itself of the original inflections; and that as time went on he grew more particular in the matter of language, and discarded usages in which he had once indulged, just as in literature he came at last to abandon the personification of abstractions which formed a marked characteristic of his early style. This view has for its support the undoubted fact that Chaucer did live for a while in the North, and that traces of the Northern dialect do appear in some of his writings. It is certainly nothing unreasonable to suppose that a liberty which he occasionally allowed himself in more advanced years, he may have given himself up to with greater freedom in his earlier efforts. Still, this is, after all, merely a work-

ing hypothesis, framed to reconcile a view of the genuineness of the poem in question with that derived from considerations of an altogether different character.

For if the advocates of Chaucer's authorship of the translation are discouraged by the result of the examination made of the metrical and grammatical tests, they have a right to be correspondingly elated by the result of a survey of what, for the lack of a better word, may be called the literary tests. In one sense these latter fully deserve the name. They are based upon the impression which a person of judgment and taste often receives upon reading a particular work that it reflects the manner of a particular author; that its whole tone reminds him of the prevailing tone that pervades the other works which came from the same source. This would be eminently true of the 'Romance of the Rose' in relation to Chaucer. It would be just as eminently untrue of any other known writer of his time, as, for instance, Gower. Every one looking at the translation purely from this point of view, and compelled to make a choice between the two men, would say at once that it must have come from the former, and that it could not under any conceivable circumstances have come from the latter. But arguments of such a kind, which depend upon the literary sense, both to make and to appreciate when made, are too fine and delicate to influence any but a very limited class of special students. It is avoirdupois weight that must be employed in determining this matter, and not troy. Accordingly under the literary tests will be included not only the general nature of the translation, but the special linguistic peculiarities which characterize that almost

intangible something which we call an author's style. Tests of this kind yield in importance to none; perhaps they are superior in importance to all. For some unaccountable reason, however, they have been almost entirely ignored or very crudely employed. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that they should be made at this point the subject of fullest examination. Before taking up, however, the discussion of the specific details that require investigation, it is essential to gain a clear comprehension of the nature of the problem that is presented, not to the student of metre or grammar, but to the student of literature.

I have pointed out previously the fidelity of the translation of the *Roman de la Rose*. But even more remarkable is its felicity. This at once takes it out of the roll of common versions. Mr. Skeat in his consideration of the question entirely misses the point of the argument based upon this most distinctive peculiarity. There exist, he says, in other cases different early translations of the same work, and almost all of them are anonymous. He furnishes proofs of this assertion which are absolutely convincing. From them he argues that Chaucer's rendering of the *Roman de la Rose* was quite unlikely to have been the only one made. It is therefore wholly unnecessary to assume that he was the author of the particular one that has been preserved. The fact of the existence of independent versions of the same original can easily be conceded without conceding the inference that has been drawn from the fact. We do not, indeed, have the slightest knowledge of any other rendering than this of the French poem, which in its character, it

may be added, is entirely unlike the works that were then commonly turned into English. But were it certain that there had been half a dozen, we should be confronted with precisely the same difficulty that besets us now when we assume that the translation preserved is not the translation that Chaucer made. How did it happen that there came into existence two versions, with the spurious one so exceedingly good that by nobody is it deemed unworthy of him whose genuine one is supposed to have perished?

This is where the real difficulty lies. It is not the mere existence of a rendering that is the main point to which attention is to be directed. It is its excellence. There are unquestionably in Early English several translations of the same original, different in various ways from one another, and independent of one another as regards their authorship. But they all agree in possessing one common characteristic. They are all dull. They all exhibit scarcely a trace of the existence of any poetical power in their writers. They could have been written by anybody. It is no wonder, therefore, that they are so generally anonymous. Stupidity can reproduce itself without limit and in all varieties of form, and no one is interested in preserving the name of its perpetrator. The case of these various versions which have been cited has no resemblance to that of this particular translation. It is poetical ability that has been employed upon the latter, and poetical ability of no mean order. It has employed itself, too, upon the same work which occupied the attention of the most famous English author of his time, and was well known to have occupied

it. It was so successful also that it perpetuated itself at the expense of the genuine translation with which it entered into competition. We are therefore asked to believe that the version handed down, though not by Chaucer, has been produced by a contemporary of poetical genius but little inferior, yet whose name has not been preserved.

This presents at the outset a difficulty in the way of those who insist that the existing translation of the *Roman de la Rose* is not the work of Chaucer. But there are others in connection with it that make it much more formidable. In considering the genuineness of certain of the disputed poems it has always been a common question to ask, Who are the unknown authors who have written pieces superior to the productions of the most noted disciples of the poet, and yet have not left behind even a record of their names? If they existed, how did it happen that they wrote nothing more? If they wrote so well, how did it happen that their memory has sunk into oblivion, while that of their inferiors has survived? These are legitimate and fair questions. The difficulties they suggest are not insuperable, but there is nothing gained by pretending that they are not difficulties. Still less impression is produced upon the student of literature by the sudden discovery that productions which have been universally admired and extolled, so long as they were believed to be Chaucer's composition, turn out to be of no merit whatever as soon as the conclusion is reached that they are not his. No candid man will refuse to admit that the existence of anonymous works of a good deal of length and of a good deal more

of merit is a matter not capable of easy explanation. At the same time, the fact must also be admitted. There are similar examples at this early period of works displaying distinctive poetical ability on the part of writers who remain utterly unknown. They are not numerous, but they are to be found. We must go back, for instance, to Chaucer himself to find anything that compares in beauty with the ballad of the 'Nut-Brown Maid.' Yet up to this time the secret of the authorship of that piece has been so well kept, or the knowledge of it has so utterly perished, that speculation does not even venture to suggest a possible name.

The 'Romance of the Rose,' however, stands on entirely different literary ground from the anonymous productions that were long imputed to the poet and have now been discarded from the list of his works. There is in them all—or at least with one exception—a decided variation from his usual manner. It is one felt more easily than it can be explained. Still, it can be pointed out so as to be clearly recognized by the reader. Even the words and phrases that are borrowed directly from Chaucer appear frequently in these pieces rather in the nature of patches than as an organic part of the garment which has been woven by the poet. Herein they present the first difference to the version of the *Roman de la Rose*. The strongest sort of evidence for its genuineness is the Chaucerian character of the translation. It is thoroughly impregnated with his peculiarities of style and diction. This can be and will be made so manifest that he who runs may read. It uses his words, his phrases, his mannerisms, his methods of transition, and

uses them very often in places where there is nothing in the original to suggest the particular form of expression that is employed. One familiar both with this work and with the works of Chaucer feels this to be a fact, without being very clear in his own mind why he feels it to be a fact. For the existence of this vague impression it will now be our business to show the reason.

There is one characteristic in which the earlier writer differs in a marked degree from the later. The former has no hesitation in repeating again and again not only the same words, but the same phrases, and in precisely the same connection. It is not, indeed, unusual to find whole lines constantly reappearing. This is especially true of those that are employed either in the introduction of similar matter or in the transition to matter entirely different. In such cases the lines have come to partake almost of the nature of formulas invented for that specific purpose. On the other hand, the later author, so far as it lies in his power, refrains carefully from this manner of proceeding. Even if he repeats the same ideas, he takes pains to put them in other words. This he is usually enabled to do with comparatively little difficulty, because in the development of the language new modes of expression have been struck out, new variations in the mode of representing the same conceptions have been brought into play. As a result of this richness of the speech, there arises at last a certain aversion to the frequent use of any special phrase. The reader dislikes it, the writer avoids it. Yet the resources of language are limited; the resources of any one man's language are more limited still. The modern author is apt,

in consequence, to find himself falling into the use of a certain set of phrases. It sometimes takes place unconsciously. It sometimes takes place from necessity. Do the best he can, he is driven by the limitations of language, or by his own limitations, to resort again and again to formulas of expression which he would prefer to use sparingly. But feelings of this nature did not so much as present themselves to the mind of the early poet or to the men who delighted in what he wrote. The recurrence of the same phrases would have been no more heeded by them in composition than it would be by us in conversation. As in themselves they were generally unimportant and very often little more than expletive, their frequent employment no more jarred then upon the literary sense than does now the regular repetition of prepositions and conjunctions.

The student of all early poetry, at least of certain orders of it, will be sure to see this characteristic exemplified constantly. It is, however, especially observable in Chaucer. There are certain expressions that recur continually in his writings. They are employed mainly for the sake of effecting a transition, or of filling out the measure, or of securing a ryme. He goes even further than this. It is not at all unusual for him to repeat in different productions the same thought in essentially the same words. A list of parallel passages collected from various parts of his writings would rapidly swell to scores of examples, and would finally mount up among the hundreds. Among them, too, would be included lines that are exactly, or almost exactly, alike. The practice, in truth, of repeating himself, in which Chaucer indulges, is

often carried to an extent that would strike a modern author with surprise and a modern critic with horror. No student of his writings can well have overlooked the frequency with which his characters, when placed in distressing circumstances, are represented as saying to themselves "alas!" It is perhaps more calculated to arrest the attention because it is a word that no one ever thinks of saying to anybody else. But even more remarkable is the frequency with which these same characters give utterance to their regret for having been born. Of any possible objection to the repetition of the same expressions Chaucer does not even seem to be aware. No modern poet could ever allow himself a freedom in this respect, which the following examples show was taken by the early poet without scruple:

"That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, 'alas!'"
Knight's tale, line 215.

"He seyde, 'Allas! that day that I was born!'"
Ib., line 365.

"'Alas!' quod he, 'that day that I was bore!'"
Ib., line 684.

"'Allas!' quod John, 'the day that I was born!'"
Reeve's tale, line 189.

"For I may synge allas! and weylawey!
That I was born."
Shipman's tale, line 118.

"'Allas!' quod he, 'allas that I was wroght!'"
Monk's tale, line 439.

"'Allas! that I was bore!'"
Doctor's tale, line 215.

"'Allas!' quod she, 'that ever I was born!'"
Franklin's tale, line 735.

"'Allas! that I was wroght!'"
Manciple's tale, line 169.

"'Alas!' quoth she, 'that I was wroght!'"
Death of Blanche, line 90.

"'Me is wo that I was born!'"
Ib., line 566.

"And seyde, 'Allas! that I was bore!'"
Ib., line 1301.

"'Allas!' quod he, 'the day that I was born!'"
Legend of Good Women, line 658.

"'Allas!' quod he, 'the day that I was born!'"
Ib., line 833.

"'Allas! that I was born!' quod Eneas."
Ib., line 1027.

"'That I was born! allas!'"
Ib., line 1308.

"'Allas!' quod she, 'that ever I was wroght!'"
Ib., line 2187.

"'Waylawey the day that I was born!'"
Troilus and Cressida, iii., 304.

"'Allas! that I was born!'"
Ib., iii., 1103.

"'That I was born! allas!'"
Ib., iii., 1423.

"'Allas the while
That I was born!'"
Ib., v., 1276.

There is nothing peculiar about this expression itself.

Gower has it, indeed, once.[1] What is peculiar here is the extraordinary extent of its usage. Still, it does no more than exemplify on a large scale what is throughout one of the most marked characteristics of Chaucer's style.

The main thing to be considered at this point, however, is the poet's constant employment of certain individual words and brief phrases. These, to be sure, do not occur with any approach to uniformity in his various productions. Certain of them will abound in one poem. The very same ones will scarcely be met with at all in another. Even in the same work, if of any length, particular words and phrases will often be found in one part of it, while another part of it will not furnish a single example of their use. Still, some of them will invariably be met. With all this wide variation, therefore, in their mode of employment, they can be found scattered through the poet's writings with such sufficiency of frequency and uniformity that the non-appearance of any of them at all in a piece ascribed to him would be *prima-facie* evidence of its spuriousness. It is, in truth, largely their presence that has contributed to give the impression we unconsciously receive of what we call Chaucer's manner.

Of course, no one author monopolizes a characteristic of this kind. It is to be found in varying degrees in all. Naturally, therefore, it appears in the translator of the *Roman de la Rose*. He has likewise his expressions which he repeats constantly for the sake of filling out the measure or of securing a ryme. They are usually not found in his original. Rarely even are they

[1] Vol. ii., page 116 (Pauli).

suggested by it. They are part of himself, and owe their existence, so far as we can tell, to no one but himself. Here arises the first significant circumstance in the discussion from the literary point of view of the authorship of this work. The distinctive expressions which characterize the style of the writer of the 'Romance of the Rose' are the very same distinctive expressions that Chaucer uses. They are also used in precisely the same way. The mannerisms of the one author are the mannerisms of the other. Moreover, they occur in the translation in about the same proportion as they do in the admittedly genuine writings of the poet. There are variations, to be sure, but variations no greater than can be found between different parts of Chaucer's own works. The testimony they present cannot be disregarded, though for some reason it has so far been persistently neglected. The value of evidence of this sort, as there has been and will be frequent occasion to remark, rests upon its cumulative character. That any particular expression should occur frequently in two contemporary poets would ordinarily not be a matter worth considering. Resort to it would be open to every one. There would be nothing strange if several employed it, especially if it were one in popular use. Even were there something exceptional in its character, its occurrence in different writers could be explained, if not explained away. But the moment several similar expressions are found in two productions, the matter puts on a different aspect. Each additional example adds to the difficulty of accounting for the independent existence of the others.

But when this peculiarity of usage embraces a whole class of phrases precisely alike, the difficulty of ascribing the works in which they appear to different writers increases not in an arithmetical but in a geometrical ratio. When, finally, it includes not merely a single class, but extends to a number of classes, the theory of independent authorship can hardly be maintained unless supported by evidence of the most positive and unquestionable character. This must be the justification for the introduction of the somewhat tedious details to the consideration of which the argument now leads us.

What are the words and phrases which Chaucer uses with frequency enough to constitute them a mark of his style? What are the formulas of speech to which he habitually resorts in his versification? What are the expressions he is apt to repeat, not so much with the idea of modifying the meaning as of filling out the line with the requisite number of feet, or of enabling him to secure with least effort a satisfactory ryme? They can be divided into several classes. Each of these will contain a number of individual words or phrases. The list will not include all that might be given, but it will include what are on the whole the most important and the least subject to question. When these have once been satisfactorily determined, it becomes a comparatively easy matter for any one to test for himself the fact and the extent of their employment in the 'Romance of the Rose.' It is, of course, to be kept in mind that the comparison is carried on between a work consisting of 7700 lines and a body of poetry extending to more than 34,000. Allowance must accordingly be made

for the disproportion. This being understood, it is with the simplest of these forms of expression that we begin.

No attentive student of Chaucer's poetry can have failed to be struck with the frequency with which he makes use of certain common words. On the whole, they are found mostly at the end of the line, though they are far from being limited to that place. Some of them, indeed, such as *certes*, can hardly be said to occur there at all. It is further to be observed of many of them, especially of those most often used, that while they cannot be called absolutely unnecessary to the sense, the signification of the passage, in the great majority of instances, would have been very slightly affected if they had not made their appearance at all. They are somewhat like the expletive terms which we use in conversation, not so much to add anything to the actual purport of what we say as to give liveliness and vigor to its utterance. Moreover, the fact that hardly any of these expressions occur in Chaucer's prose is satisfactory proof that it was metrical considerations that dictated their introduction far more than the desire or necessity of modifying the meaning. It is not worth while to mention all of these terms which can be found in the writings of the poet. The attention will be confined here to those that are employed as a general rule with the most frequency and the most regularity. In both respects there is naturally a good deal of variation. There is, in particular, great divergence in the extent of the use of these terms in different poems. This may have been due to difference of verse or to difference of subject. More often, perhaps, it was due to the wide

difference of times at which the works were produced in which they are found. Of the variation in this matter of Chaucer's manner of expression, the exclamation *lo*, one of the words which will not be included in this list, furnishes a good example. A comparison of two pieces, between which there is not much disparity as regards length, will make manifest how utterly dependent upon the pleasure of the writer was the employment of any special term. In the 'House of Fame,' a poem consisting of 2158 lines, *lo* occurs twelve times at the beginning of a line, seventeen times in the middle, and three times at the end—in all thirty-two times. In the 'Legend of Good Women,' a poem of 2723 lines, *lo* occurs but three times—twice at the beginning of a line, and once as the second word in it.[1] These two productions, therefore, stand at almost opposite poles in regard to the use of this particular exclamation.

Differences of the same nature will be found in the case of several other words for the employment of which Chaucer shows special fondness. The absence of one or more of them from any particular production cannot, therefore, be deemed a matter of much consequence. It is their general prevalence in the whole body of his writings which entitles them to constitute a distinct class of expressions, by the presence or comparative frequency of which, in any disputed work, we are justified in drawing inferences as to its possible or probable authenticity. The words of this first class, specially representative as far as the poet is concerned, are the adverbs *iwis*, *certes*, and *certain*, all meaning 'certainly';

[1] Lines 2327, 2540, and 391.

the exclamation *alas;* the oath *parde;* the noun *del,* 'deal,' at the end of a line, in its two most common combinations of *every del* and *never a del;* and finally the compound *everichon,* 'every one,' occurring in the same place. Though there is a good deal of variation in the employment of several of these in different productions, the frequent recurrence of all of them characterizes the style of Chaucer. Here is the first point of agreement. Their frequent recurrence characterizes also the style of the translator of the *Roman de la Rose.*[1]

The second class consists of various adverbial phrases, made up of substances preceded by the preposition *withoute*(*n*). This, in certain cases, interchanges with *out of* for the sake of the measure. The noun, also, in these expressions is often preceded by *any.* It hardly needs to be said that there are numerous substantives governed by this preposition which have no claim to be considered in this discussion. Here the attention is necessarily limited to those that do not usually enter into the framework of the sentence as an absolutely essential part of its structure, and therefore do not specially affect its meaning. They are ordinarily little more than conventional phrases, which could be employed or rejected at will, though naturally the line that separates the expletive from the significant use is not always clearly defined. The list of combinations of substantives with this preposition, common to Chaucer and to the 'Romance of the Rose,' is a somewhat long one. It, however, divides itself easily into two groups, accord-

[1] The evidence upon which this and the following statements are based will be found in detail in the Appendix.

ing to the comparative frequency of the appearance of the individual phrases that belong to each. The first includes the expressions *withouten* or *out of doute; withouten* or *out of drede, drede* having also the sense of 'doubt'; *withouten more* or *mo;* and *withouten wordes more* or *mo.* In the case of the members of this group, the resemblance between the two writers often, or rather generally, extends to minute details. Chaucer, for instance, seems to prefer the expression *out of doute* to *withouten doute.* He employs the former twenty times and the latter fourteen. The same feeling characterizes the translator of the *Roman de la Rose.* The one phrase is found four times in his version, the other twice. It is very rarely that any difference between the poet's writings and this version can be detected in a matter seemingly so indifferent as the comparative frequency of these slight variations of form. In fact, in the single instance in which it exists—*withouten* or *out of drede*—it is not at all serious.

The second group includes a number of expressions which occur much less frequently. They are consequently of altogether inferior importance to those contained in the list just given. Still, they may be regarded as important enough to demand notice. The phrases of this group that are common to the writings of Chaucer and to the 'Romance of the Rose' are *withouten fable, withouten fail, withouten lees, withouten let, withouten repentaunce, withouten repentyng, withouten respite, withouten wene,* and *withouten were.* Unlike the expressions in the preceding list, not one of these occurs often enough to be regarded as a specially distinctive

characteristic of the poet's style. It is only the prevalence of expressions of this general nature that forces itself upon the attention, and is entitled to consideration. The widest variation occurs, in fact, in the employment of the individual phrases. Thus, *withouten lees*, which is found twice in the 'Romance of the Rose,' appears four times in Chaucer's undisputed writings. But it cannot be discovered in his two longest works—'Troilus and Cressida' and the 'Canterbury Tales'—and these together embrace fully three fourths of all his poetry. It would be natural, accordingly, that expressions which are found in one of the writings that are now subjected to comparison should not be found in the other. It is assuredly nothing to excite surprise that this should be the case. What is surprising is that it happens so seldom. The differences of expression are scarcely noticeable. The greatest that can be discovered between the writings compared is in the case of *withouten wene* and *withouten were*. There are in the translation ten instances of the former and eight of the latter. In Chaucer's undisputed productions there is but one of each. These last two expressions, it may be added, are comparatively common in Barbour's 'Bruce,' though the noun is there usually preceded by the prepositions *forouten* or *but*, instead of *withouten*. It may be, therefore, that the phrases are specially characteristic of the Northern dialect. In addition, there are a certain number of these expressions which are found in the one body of writings compared and not in the other. But in not a single instance do they occur frequently. Thus, *withouten gesse* appears twice in the 'Romance

of the Rose,' and *withouten lesing* once. Neither one of the two is to be discovered in Chaucer. On the other hand, *withouten lie* occurs four times in Chaucer, *withouten word* three times, *withouten book* twice, and *withouten more speche* six times. There is not an instance of the employment of any one of these phrases in this translation. But again, the somewhat uncommon forms *withouten more respite*, *withouten repentaunce*, and *withouten repentyng* are to be found both in the 'Romance of the Rose' and in the poet's undisputed writings—in each case very infrequently.

The phrases just given constitute all of the second class that are of sufficient importance to be considered. Several of its second group are hardly worthy of the attention they have received. They have been introduced to make the list of these expressions complete, rather than because any special weight can be considered as attaching to their appearance in any given work, or to their failure to appear. The third class consists of interjectional phrases made up of the combination of certain substantives and adverbs with the infinitive of the verbs *say* and *tell*. The words that enter most frequently into these combinations are the noun *sooth*, 'truth,' and its corresponding adverb *soothly*. The forms in which these generally appear are the expressions *soth* or *sothly to say* and *soth* or *sothly to tell*. There are slight variations of these phrases produced by prefixing the definite article to the noun and by inserting the preposition *for* between the noun or adverb and the infinitive. It is naturally the necessities of the measure that dictate such slight changes, so far as they occur.

These expressions are common in Chaucer's writings, especially in his earlier productions. They are likewise common in the 'Romance of the Rose.' Here once more the resemblance between the two extends to minute details. Chaucer prefers the phrases with the verb *say* to the phrases with the verb *tell*. The former he uses forty-five times; the latter but ten. The same disparity of usage, and the same kind of disparity, is found in this translation. Its writer resorts to the one expression fourteen times; to the other but thrice. The forms with the noun are also preferred by Chaucer to those with the adverb. They stand in his writings in the proportion of fifty-one to four. The same thing is true of the 'Romance of the Rose.' In that the corresponding proportion is fifteen to two.

No such marvellous likeness of usage can be asserted of the combination of the verbs just mentioned with the adverb *shortly*, usually standing before the infinitive, though sometimes after it. Examples of these are not exceedingly numerous in Chaucer. They are sufficiently so, however, to entitle them to rank as a characteristic of his style. In this case there is apparently a marked divergence between the usage of the translation and that found in the poet's undisputed writings. In the latter, the instances in which *shortly to tell* and *shortly to say* appear overrun, if taken together, a score. In the former there are but two. In addition, the 'Legend of Good Women' and 'Troilus and Cressida' add more than half a dozen examples of the variant form *to telle in short*. This increases still more the disparity between the writings compared. It might seem, therefore, that

there was certainly no ground for introducing into this discussion the consideration of these particular phrases as a proof of common authorship. On the contrary, there is ample reason. For the peculiarity about these expressions is, that there is strictly not the slightest justification for employing them at all in the translation of the *Roman de la Rose*. The two instances in which they are to be found in the English version occur in the course of the story which is told of Narcissus. The original does not profess to tell this shortly. Nor does it profess to tell anything shortly, though there is one passage in which Lorris does indicate his intention of giving certain instructions briefly, in order that thereby they might be more easily treasured in the memory.[1] He succeeds in doing it in three hundred and fifty lines. It will be seen from this one illustration that there was not much occasion in any instance to resort to such an expression as *shortly to tell*, or anything resembling it. As it occurs in the English version, it is therefore nothing but the addition by the translator of what had become to him merely a conventional formula of speech. It was not introduced because the faithful rendering of the French poem required it—for that distinctly did not require it—but simply because it was a phrase which he was in the habit of employing.

Did we need further evidence of the truth of this view, we should find it in the lines which introduce the description of the habitation of Age. "Knowest thou where Age dwells?" says the original, literally rendered; "I will tell thee without delaying."[2] It is not

[1] *Roman de la Rose*, line 2235. [2] Ib., line 4641.

brevity of space that is promised here, but brevity of time. Nothing is said about the account being given in a few words. Yet, according to the natural interpretation of his lines, this is the very particular which the translator is at pains to add. He says,

> " Where Age abit,[1] I will thee tell
> Shortly, and no whilè dwell."[2]

If the 'shortly' of the rendering refers to space, the addition is made all the more noteworthy because the passage of the French poem, instead of being contracted in the translation, is actually expanded. Particulars are introduced which increase its length as well as its expressiveness and force. They are introduced, too, with a skill which shows the hand of a great master. The description of the habitation of Age is, in truth, one of the happiest examples of the freedom with which the translator dealt with his material when he chose not to adhere to it very closely, as was frequently the case in the middle portion of the English version. As such they are worth citing in full. The lines that have just been quoted have immediately following them these:

> " For thither behoveth thee to go,
> If Death in youthè thee not slo;[3]
> Of this journey thou mayest not fail.
> With her Labor and Travail
> Lodgèd be with Sorrow and Wo,
> *That never out of her court go.
> *Pain and Distress, Sickness and Ire,
> *And Melancholy, that angry sire,

[1] Abides. [2] Line 4989. [3] Slay.

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*Be of her palace senatórs:
*Groaning and Grucching[1] her harbingérs,
That[2] day and night, her to torment,
With cruel Death they[2] her present,
And tellen her, early and late,
That Death stands armèd at her gate."

There are many slight particulars—such, for instance, as Death standing armed at the gate of Age—that are not to be found in the original. But, besides these, the lines that are marked with asterisks are wholly the addition of the translator. No one can think them unworthy of Chaucer. If he were not their composer, it is certainly strange that the hand that wrote them was content to write nothing more than this version.

The fourth class consists of certain phrases in which the writer does not make an absolutely unqualified assertion, but modifies it so as to give it the appearance of a personal opinion. The most peculiar of these is *I undertake*, in the sense of 'I venture to say,' 'I affirm.' A satisfactory illustration can be seen in the line of the general Prologue:

"And he was not right fat, I undertake."

This usage of the verb never could have been widespread. It probably was always a very limited one. While its employment by Chaucer is not excessive, it occurs often enough to show that it was an expression to which he was partial. A far more common mode of making an assertion of this kind is represented in the poet's writings by *I dare say*, sometimes with an adverb—usually *well*—inserted between the two verbs for the

[1] Complaining, murmuring.

[2] *That—they* is equivalent to *who*.

sake of the measure. The same reason often leads to the subject pronoun following its verb. From their very nature this expression, at least in its simplest form, must have been common in colloquial speech. To this day it remains so. It is therefore particularly true of it that it is not the fact of its occurrence, but its frequency, that entitles it to the distinction of being called characteristic. There is to be added, however, that it, like many of the expressions that have already been considered, would never be much used by any author save one who moved persistently on low levels, and ordinarily kept close to the language of daily life. Another one of these colloquial phrases that are constantly recurring in Chaucer is *I guess*, or *as I guess*. It is found almost invariably at the end of the line. This shows that the ryme had full as much to do with its employment as the sense. Two other of these phrases, not essentially different, are made up of the singular or plural form of the imperative of the verb *trust*, followed by the adverb *well* or the pronoun *me*. In a very few instances they are even joined together in such expressions as *trusteth me well*. Neither one of these is found very often, though each is frequent enough to be distinctly noticeable. Far different is it with the phrase *God wot*, or *God it wot*. This expression, almost invariably expletive, is exceedingly common in Chaucer; though in some whole poems, such, for instance, as the 'House of Fame,' it does not appear at all. Not so common, though much more so than by many will be thought necessary, is the oath *by God*. It was with Chaucer a vernacular rendering of the French *parde*. However

frequently it may have been heard on the lips of his contemporaries, he seems to have been the only one to employ it in literature. Certainly not a single instance of its use can be found in Gower's 'Confessio Amantis' or in Barbour's 'Bruce.'

All the phrases that have just been mentioned are characteristic of the poet's style. Some of them are highly so. But they are likewise characteristic of the style of the translator of the *Roman de la Rose*. They all appear in his version. They usually appear also in about the same proportion as in the undoubted writings of Chaucer. The only marked exception in this respect is in the case of the oath which has been specified as a somewhat distinctive peculiarity of the poet among his contemporaries. This is found but once in the 'Romance of the Rose.' Even here it does not occur in the original. It is the French *certes* that is so rendered.[1] In the case of the others, there is no essential difference in the extent of their usage. The resemblance between the writings compared is made more prominent by the fact that there is rarely, if ever, anything at all in the *Roman de la Rose* to require the insertion of these expressions in the translation. This is true, to be sure, of those belonging to the other classes. But it is specially significant in phrases of this sort. These, while they are usually expletive or nearly so, at times modify to a certain extent the meaning. They were not likely, therefore, to have been introduced without the authority of the original, had they not been expressions to the use of which the writer was addicted.

[1] *Roman de la Rose*, line 3552.

There still remains the class of invocatory phrases. In these the writings of Chaucer abound. Their number is almost legion, and they appear in every variety of form and wording. They belong to the language of common life even more than those of the preceding class, and it is this natural colloquial speech that is always represented in Chaucer when there is no occasion to rise above it. None of these are common in the sense in which the expressions belonging to the other classes are common. If any one of them is to be found as often as half a dozen times, it becomes comparatively remarkable for the frequency of its occurrence. It is therefore the habit of interlarding the lines with these invocatory phrases that is of much more importance than any similarity of individual instances. Here, again, appears another marked resemblance between Chaucer and the translator of the *Roman de la Rose*. There are in the version made by the latter several of these expressions—in fact, nearly all of them—that, so far from being taken from the French poem, do not correspond in the slightest to anything in it. The only apparent reason for their introduction is that they belong to the writer's manner. While in many of them, as employed both by Chaucer and the translator, there is the widest possible variety of phraseology combined with a general resemblance, two are perhaps worthy of specific mention as being absolutely identical in form. These are *so mote I go* and *so mote I thee*. They have the further distinction of being the invocatory phrases which are among those oftenest occurring both in the poet's works and in the 'Romance of the Rose.' *God* (*you*) *see*

is another one of these expressions that are common to both. Still, as frequency of occurrence is not a distinguishing characteristic of such phrases, additional examples of them will be given later on. These, as they are sometimes found only in single instances, may on that very account be more remarkable for their resemblance.

Here, then, we have five classes of expressions that are specially distinctive of Chaucer's style. Each class contains a number of individual words and phrases. In all they amount to about two-score. No claim has been made that there is anything exceptional in their character. The large majority of them were undoubtedly familiar to all at the time, and could have been employed by anybody. They were part of that common inheritance of poetic or linguistic formulas which each writer had received from the past. Not only were most of them in current use then, but some of them have remained so to this day. It is obvious that a number, perhaps a great number, of them will be found in the poets who preceded Chaucer. The point, therefore, is not that any particular one is peculiar to him. Most, and possibly all, will appear in various writers with varying degrees of frequency. Some of them will often be found in one author. Others of them will similarly be found in another. For illustration, Laurence Minot has two of these expressions a number of times in his poetry, though the whole of it consists of less than a thousand lines. In it *soth to say* or *to tell* occurs four times, and the adverb *iwis* five times. These, however, are all that do occur. None of the numerous others are represented at all. It would not therefore be the fact that a few of these phrases

are found in the writings of two distinct authors that would be especially noteworthy. It would be the fact that all of them are so found, and are found with about the same degree of frequency in each. It is important, furthermore, to repeat that it is not the occasional appearance of several of them in different productions that lends probability to the assumption that these productions came from one and the same author. It would be the fact that they occurred often enough to form a distinguishing peculiarity of the mode of expression. It is this, and this alone, that takes them out of the roll of words and phrases which any one would naturally, as he could rightfully, use, and constitutes them a characteristic of individual style.

This is what they undoubtedly are in the case of Chaucer. But it is also this which they are in the case of the translator of the *Roman de la Rose*. The usage of the two in the employment of these words and phrases is essentially the same. In many instances it preserves an almost exact proportion. Such differences as exist are no greater than can be found between different portions of the poet's own work. They have usually also an easy explanation in the different nature of the subject. This state of things is the first difficulty which he is called upon to encounter who denies the poet's authorship of the translation. He has to assume that certain expressions which appear to be distinctive marks of the language of one writer may also be the distinctive marks of the language of any other, or at least of one other. Nor is this the only difficulty he has to meet. The list given of the phrases common to the writings

compared includes all to which Chaucer, as distinguished from his contemporaries, can be said to be specially addicted. At least, if there be any exception at all, it can be found only in the invocatory expression *for God's love*, or *for the love of God*. This, which is found but once in the 'Romance of the Rose,'[1] occurs with a fair degree of frequency in certain of the poet's works. Even of Chaucer's less distinctive phrases there are but few which are not represented in this translation. When mention has been made of *dreadless* in the sense of 'doubtless,' *cares cold*, *maugre* (*one's*) *head*, and *so mote I thrive*, the list has practically been exhausted of special expressions that are not common to the two writers, if the writers are two. Not one of these latter, however, occurs on any large scale in the poet's writings. Such as they are, however, they furnish the most conspicuous variation that can be found between the phraseology that characterizes the works compared. But surely no one will pretend that they furnish a variation conspicuous in itself.

It is perhaps possible that the claim may be made that all these various expressions which have been enumerated are not really distinctive; that the very inevitableness of their constant employment is of itself evidence that they cannot be so. It may be further maintained that Chaucer and the author of this translation were both doing no more than make use of the common phraseology of the time. Consequently, if we had extant a great body of productions of different poets, we should find all these words and phrases re-

[1] Line 2135.

peated again and again, and not improbably by several different writers. The argument, therefore, based upon their constant occurrence in the works discussed, while plausible, may be regarded by some as far from convincing. It is certainly unfortunate that no great body of contemporary rymed production of different authors belonging to the same region, and occupying a similar station in life, does exist for the purpose of comparison.[1] To this extent the reasoning must, in some measure, always lack the confirmation of its correctness or the exposure of its falsity. Still, we are not left wholly helpless in this matter. If we do not have a number of independent contemporary works of the character specified, we have at least one. Its bulk, moreover, is sufficient to cause it to be considered as something of an equivalent to counterbalance the lack of separate slighter productions of various authors. This is the 'Confessio Amantis.' It contains about as many lines as are to be found in Chaucer's undisputed writings. It is written in the measure found in the 'Death of Blanche,' the 'House of Fame,' and the 'Romance of the Rose.' Its author, moreover, was at one time, and perhaps always, a personal friend of his great contemporary. The literary and social influences which surrounded both could not have been widely different. We can feel, indeed, an almost absolute confidence that they were precisely the same. If, therefore, there were nothing peculiar in the phraseology of the one, if he were doing nothing more than make use of a common stock in the employment of

[1] It is doubtless unnecessary to say that alliterative poetry will afford no better test than will prose.

which he displayed no individuality, we should expect to see an essentially similar phraseology in the other, and exhibited on an essentially similar scale.

There are most certainly in Gower a number of phrases and lines which either do not vary at all, or do not vary materially from those contained in Chaucer. Several of them are common to the two authors and also to the 'Romance of the Rose.' In all of the three appear such phrases—and sometimes in a number of instances—as 'mine herte rote,' 'my worldes blis,' 'loves servaunts,' 'that was ruth,' 'a pair of bedes,' 'it is no drede,' 'it is a wonder for to here,' 'trewe as steele,' 'to make mone,' 'in bokes, as I rede,' and a few others. There are again in Gower a number of expressions which are essentially the same as those contained in Chaucer, and not infrequently precisely the same. We find in the 'Confessio Amantis' such lines or parts of lines as "The dede slepe," "It nedeth nought to make it queinte," "He hath his tunge affiled," "To sowe cockel with the corn," "The waies ben so slider," "It is a pite for to here," "Ne fully quik, ne fully dede," and one or two others. With these the readers of Chaucer are familiar. It is perhaps noteworthy that nearly all the expressions common to the two writers are to be found in such of Chaucer's works as are mentioned in the list given in the prologue to the 'Legend of Good Women.' As the 'Confessio Amantis' must have been a later production than most, if not all, of these, it is more than probable that the similarity may, in certain instances, have been due to imitation, conscious or unconscious, on Gower's part. Still, with the cause of these resemblances the present argu-

ment has no concern. The fact which is here to be considered is the extent to which and the frequency with which the expressions already specified as distinctive of Chaucer's style are to be found in the work of his contemporary. How stands the case in this respect?

It is first to be remarked that many of these very words and phrases, as used by Gower, are absolutely essential to the meaning. They can therefore hardly be considered as having been used in the same loose expletive way in which they are employed in the writings of Chaucer. Let us take for illustration the latter poet's common expression *God wot*. With him it is almost invariably independent of the rest of the sentence. So far as the meaning is concerned, it could usually be omitted without affecting the context. With Gower, on the contrary, its retention in the large majority of cases is necessary to the sense. The different usage of the two writers can be seen by examining the following passages—one taken from the Knight's tale, the other from the first book of the 'Confessio Amantis:'

"I have, God wot, a large feeld to ere,[1]
And wayke[2] been the oxen in my plough."

"I wol thee tellen, how it is
And what disese is to thee shape,
God wot if thee it shal escape."

No one will pretend that the phrase in these two passages stands on exactly the same footing. Still, for the sake of the argument, let them all be so treated. With this understanding we can proceed to the consideration of Gower's use of the more than three dozen words and

[1] Plough. [2] Weak.

phrases which have been specified as belonging to the language both of Chaucer and of the 'Romance of the Rose.' If there was nothing about them characteristic of individual style, all or nearly all of them ought to be found in the 'Confessio Amantis.' Taken as a body, they ought also to be found to about the same extent. Some of them should occur as often as they appear in Chaucer. There would be nothing unreasonable in the expectation that a few of them at least should occur oftener. To what result does a comparison lead?

Of the words of the first class, Gower uses *iwis* eight times to Chaucer's one hundred and thirty-one; *certes* twenty-eight times to Chaucer's one hundred and two; *certain*, as an adverb, not once to Chaucer's eighty-four. The exclamation *alas*, to the use of which Chaucer is strongly addicted, furnishes even stronger evidence of the divergence between the two writers. It occurs in the verses of the great poet three hundred and thirteen times; in the 'Confessio Amantis' just twelve times. It is fair to add that there are six instances in that work of the employment of the form *helas*. The oath *parde* occurs seventy-three times in Chaucer; it is not found in Gower at all. In *every del* there is a closer agreement between the two authors. Gower has it as a final ryme eighteen times against Chaucer's twenty-seven. In *never a del* there is a return to the old proportion. It is found in Gower only twice to Chaucer's fourteen times. The same is true of *everichoon*. As a final ryme it appears five times in Gower and forty-two times in Chaucer. The same general proportion holds true of the phrases belonging to the first group of the second class. Gower

has *withouten doute* once against Chaucer's fourteen; *withouten drede* five times against Chaucer's seventeen; *withouten more* or *mo* two times against Chaucer's sixteen. He has not a single instance of *out of doute*, or of *out of drede*, or of *withouten wordes more* or *mo*, though the last of these phrases occurs in Chaucer fifteen times and the two others twenty times each. In the less frequent phrases of the second group there is in two or three of the phrases a closer resemblance. Still, the expressions *withouten fable*, *withouten lees*, *withouten repentaunce*, *withouten repentyng*, *withouten more respite*, *withouten wene*, and *withouten were*, occurring both in the 'Romance of the Rose' and in Chaucer, do not appear in Gower at all.

The same proportion continues to prevail in the phrases of the third class. *Soth to say* appears seven times in Gower against forty-two in Chaucer; *sothly to say* once against three. *Soth to tell* occurs twice against Chaucer's nine. As *sothly to tell* is found but once in Chaucer, its absence from Gower is not remarkable. The combinations of *shortly* with the verbs *tell* and *say* occur but once in Gower against twenty-one times in Chaucer. These, it must be confessed, were a kind of expression of which the former poet had little use, and which he could rarely have employed with any approach to propriety. In the phrases of the fourth class, *I undertake*, though it is found a few times in the 'Confessio Amantis,' never occurs with the special sense which has been mentioned. The nearest approach to it is the expression twice used of *I dare wel undertake*, which also appears in Chaucer. *I dare say* and *I dare tell*, with their variant forms, occur

in Gower seven times against Chaucer's thirty-nine. In *I gesse* there is a slightly nearer approach to the usage of his contemporary. It is found nine times in Gower against forty-six times in Chaucer. The imperative of the verb *trust* with *well* occurs once in Gower against fifteen times in Chaucer. The combination of this same verb with *me*, which appears six times in Chaucer, is not seen in Gower at all. In the 'Confessio Amantis' there are hardly more than three genuine instances of *God wot* in its simple expletive use, though the phrase can be found sixteen times. In Chaucer it is found fully ninety-six times. Of these there are not more than half a dozen instances in which the phrase is an essential part of the sentence. Finally, of the expressions of the fifth class, the invocatory expressions so common in Chaucer can scarcely be said to exist in Gower. On one occasion, however, he does permit himself to use the phrase *God her see*.[1]

Statistics of this sort do not furnish very exciting reading. To the investigator of the genuineness of the 'Romance of the Rose' they are, however, exceedingly suggestive. For it is not to be forgotten that the examples of Gower's use of these expressions are all that can be raked together from a poem of about thirty-four thousand lines. It is only in three instances that the most common of them are employed over a dozen times. It is in the case of but one of these three—the then hardly worked adverb *certes*—that the whole number slightly exceeds a score. In addition, more than one third of these words and phrases do not appear in Gower at all.

[1] Vol. ii., p. 96.

After these have been deducted, more than one fourth of the remainder are not found oftener than once. The contrast accordingly between the frequency of these expressions in Chaucer's writings and their rarity in the 'Confessio Amantis' cannot fail to be recognized distinctly. It is evident from the simple recital of the facts that the employment of the words and phrases specified could never be reckoned among the mannerisms of Gower's style. But just as marked is the contrast between the usage seen in the voluminous production of which he was the author and that seen in the production, not one fourth as large, for which the translator of the *Roman de la Rose* was responsible. In the latter work are not only examples of every one of these expressions to be found, but in most cases several examples. The test in this matter is of a kind which it lies in the power of every one to apply. If a long passage, say two thousand lines, be taken from any part of the 'Romance of the Rose,' and compared with a similar number of lines from any part of Chaucer's writings, the observer will not fail to remark the likeness between the two in this respect. If the same kind of comparison be made between it and the 'Confessio Amantis,' he will just as certainly not fail to see the unlikeness.

It may be maintained that it is unfair to draw a general inference about the productions of any one author which is based simply upon the examination of the productions of but one other author, even though the position of the two, in reference to language and literature, be not essentially different. The contention is, in a measure, just. The argument is confined to one writer

only because there are no more who fulfil all the conditions. Still, there is another contemporary of Chaucer who lived in the same island, though he was subjected to social and linguistic influences of a somewhat different character. This is Barbour, archdeacon of Aberdeen. In 1375 he was engaged, as he tells us himself, in his compilation of his poem celebrating the deeds of Robert Bruce. When completed, it was about twice the length of the existing English version of the *Roman de la Rose*. If the expressions which have been specified were then common characteristics of the universal speech, and not to any marked extent individual peculiarities, we should expect to see all or most of them exemplified in his work. We should at least expect to see them more largely represented, and represented on a larger scale, than in the 'Confessio Amantis.' For Barbour's style, while it lacks the smoothness and monotonous regularity of Gower's, lacks even more its stiffness. His modes of expression are far easier, far more colloquial. This brings him nearer to the literary attitude of Chaucer, though nobody but a Scotchman would ever have the effrontery to suggest a comparison between the two men. Yet the same general statements are true of Barbour that have been made of Gower. There are variations of usage, as might be expected. But they are not variations that weaken in the slightest the conclusions to which the examination of the 'Confessio Amantis' leads. Barbour lacks entirely certain of these words and phrases. Some of them which are found in Gower are not found in him. Some which are found in him are not found in Gower. Some of these expressions are more common

with him than with Gower, and some less; but in hardly a single instance is any of them common in the sense in which all of them are common in Chaucer and in the 'Romance of the Rose.' In no case would they ever be pointed out as examples of peculiarities of his style.

This assuredly militates against the duality of Chaucer and the translator. It is in the highest degree improbable that any further comparisons would show any different result. Hazardous as it is to put forth a declaration of a negative character, and difficult as it is to maintain one, I venture to assert that in the whole range of Early-English literature there is not another single production, or collection of productions, extending to five times the length of the 'Romance of the Rose' which can be found to display one fifth of the similar peculiarities of phraseology which have been pointed out as existing between that version and the undisputed works of the poet. But we are far from having done with the resemblances between Chaucer's writings and this translation. The words and phrases that have just been considered are common words and phrases. None of them may ever have been used to such an extent in any previous or contemporary productions as they are found in the works in which they have just been described as appearing. There is no reason, in the nature of things, however, why some of them at least should not have been. But there are, in addition, a number of special phrases which are employed both by Chaucer and by the maker of the version. Most of them are somewhat peculiar. They were not of the kind to be widely current. Some belonging to the list must have

been limited to the speech of a very small class. Those of them which will be specified here are introduced for two reasons. One is, that they are not to be found in Gower. The other is, that there is nothing in the French poem to suggest the phrase, and sometimes not even to suggest the idea. These peculiar expressions, varying as they do in their character, will be given generally in the order in which they appear in the translation. Here are some of the most remarkable, with the places where they are to be found:

To quite one's while, in the sense of 'to repay one's time and trouble,' occurs in the Man of Law's tale and in the 'Legend of Good Women.' It appears twice in the 'Romance of the Rose.'[1] The peculiar phrase *for wood*, equivalent to the modern colloquial expression 'like mad,' is found in the 'House of Fame' and in the 'Legend of Good Women.' It also occurs in the 'Romance of the Rose,' where it is strengthened by the word *pure* in the sense of 'very.'[2] *To conne thank*, in the sense of 'to feel obligation to,' 'to feel pleasure at,' is in the Knight's tale, in 'Troilus and Cressida,' and in the prologue to the 'Astrolabe.' It is likewise in the 'Romance of the Rose.'[3] *To go or ride*, in which *go* has the sense of 'walk,' is an exceedingly common phrase in Chaucer's writings. It occurs in the 'Romance of the Rose.'[4] *To love paramours* is likewise a phrase somewhat frequently employed by Chaucer. There is no derogatory sense attached to it. Nothing more is denoted

[1] Line 486; line 2227; lines 1542, 4392.
[2] Line 1747; line 2420; line 276.
[3] Line 950; ii., 1466; line 2112.
[4] *Knight's tale*, line 1394; *Summoner's tale*, line 234; *Friar's tale*, lines 167, 171; *Merchant's tale*, lines 371, 846; *Troilus and Cressida*, iv., 1327, 1355; *Romance of the Rose*, line 2351.

by it than the love between the sexes, sometimes as contrasted with the love between the creature and the Creator. It can be found in the Knight's tale, in 'Troilus and Cressida,' and in the first version of the prologue to the 'Legend of Good Women.' It occurs in the 'Romance of the Rose.'.[1] *To die in the pain* is a phrase which signifies 'to die under torture.' It was naturally used in the strongest sort of asseveration. It can be found in the Knight's tale, in 'Troilus and Cressida,' and in the 'Romance of the Rose.'[2] The phrase *at poynt devys* occurs three times in Chaucer, once in the 'House of Fame,' once in the Miller's tale, and once in the Squire's. It occurs twice in the 'Romance of the Rose,' and in neither instance is there, what might have been hoped for, anything resembling the form in the original.[3] The idiomatic expression *to blear one's eye*, in the sense of blinding, and hence of deceiving, one, which occurs several times in Chaucer, occurs also in the 'Romance of the Rose.'[4] The phrase *he*, or *she*, or *it were wood* is so common in Chaucer that it is unnecessary to specify examples. It is equally common in the 'Romance of the Rose.'[5] The phrase *with sorry grace* can be found in the Pardoner's tale. It also appears in the 'Romance of the Rose.'[6] The phrase *take it not agrief*, that is, 'take it not in ill part,' is in the tale of the Nun's Priest, in the prologue to the tale of the Wife of Bath, in 'Troilus and Cressida,' and in the 'Parliament of Fowls.' It is

[1] Line 1254; v., 158, 332; line 260; line 4657.

[2] Line 275; i., 674; line 3326.

[3] Line 917; line 503; line 552; lines 830, 1215.

[4] Prologue to *Canon's Yeoman's tale*, line 177; prologue to *Reeve's tale*, line 11; *Reeve's tale*, line 129; *Manciple's tale*, line 148; *Romance of the Rose*, line 3912.

[5] *Romance of the Rose*, lines 3776, 5051, 5065, 6790, and 6263.

[6] Lines 414; 7099.

likewise in the 'Romance of the Rose.'[1] Another very peculiar expression, implying a reference almost contemptuous to a misfortune that cannot be retrieved, is found in 'Troilus and Cressida' in the words *farewell, fieldfare*. The same usage of the same expression occurs in the 'Romance of the Rose.'[2] A very singular employment of the word *swear*, in such a phrase as '*though* (*one*) *had it sworn*,' where it signifies 'though one had sworn to the contrary,' is found in the Knight's tale, in the prologue to the Wife of Bath's tale, and in 'Troilus and Cressida.' Precisely the same singular usage occurs in the 'Romance of the Rose.'[3]

I do not mean to convey the impression that some of these phrases may not be found scattered about the works of other writers. It would be a most extraordinary circumstance if all, or even most of them, were monopolized by one author. Two of the list just given appear, for instance, in Barbour's 'Bruce.' The thing to excite surprise would be that any large number of the very same ones should occur in the productions of two independent contemporary authors. But here we encounter the fact that they are all without exception to be found both in Chaucer and in the translator of the *Roman de la Rose*. Nor have all the examples been exhausted that could be given. The phrases *in sothfastness*, *in wordes few*, *with mischance*, and others might have been cited. Even *je vous die*, one of the few French phrases which the poet introduces in his writings, makes its appearance in this version, and that too with-

[1] Line 73; line 191; iii., 862, 1621; line 543; line 7571.
[2] iii., 861; line 5510.
[3] Line 231; line 640; iv., 976; v., 283; line 6401.

out the slightest warrant for it from anything in the original.[1] There is no easy way of avoiding the natural inference from these resemblances. It is hardly reasonable, it is actually unreasonable, to draw any other than that the expressions were due to the same hand or were imitated by the one from the other. Having little respect for the argument from vocabulary, I have not attempted to bring up for consideration special words which this translation shares with certain productions of the poet. Yet among them are some that might fairly be deemed of a somewhat striking nature. *Mafay*, for instance, is found in the 'Romance of the Rose.' It is also found in 'Troilus and Cressida.'[2] Much more marked is the curious use of the word *relic* in the sense of 'a cherished object,' 'an object of devotion.' It is twice applied in this translation to the woman whom the lover adores.[3] In one instance there is nothing corresponding to it in the original. In the other it renders the word *saintuaire*. In the 'Legend of Good Women,' however, the God of Love is represented as applying the same term to the daisy, the flower which he calls his own.

"It is my relik digne and delitable"[4]

is what he says of it in warning the poet not to approach it.

Again, similar peculiarities of inflection appear in Chaucer and the 'Romance of the Rose.' In the former the verb *stick*, even then representing two distinct but confused originals, has commonly the weak preterite *stikede*. But in 'Troilus and Cressida' can be found also the strong

[1] *Summoner's tale*, lines 124 and 130; *Romance of the Rose*, line 7406.
[2] Line 7578; iii., 52.
[3] Lines 2673 and 2907.
[4] Line 321.

preterite *stak*.[1] The employment of these same double forms characterizes the translator. In his version appear both *stak* and *stikede*.[2] There is, furthermore, a special employment of an auxiliary verb which may, perhaps, be worthy of consideration. Mr. Marsh, in his work on the 'Origin and History of the English Language,'[3] mentions as deserving of special notice what he deems a peculiar and elsewhere unexampled form of expression in the 'Romance of the Rose.' It is the use of *may* as found in the following lines:

> "'Sey boldely thi wille,' quod he,
> 'I nyl be wroth, if that I may,
> For nought that thou shalt to me say.'"[4]

In this passage *if that I may* must have some such sense as 'if I can help it.' Mr. Marsh was inclined to look upon the usage as occurring only in this poem. Yet it is hard to see in what way it differs from a line in the prologue to the Man of Law's tale,[5] or from a similar passage in the Franklin's tale, where Dorigene, the heroine, is represented as declaring

> "My body, at the leeste way,
> There shal no wight defoulen, if I may,"[6]

that is, if I can help it.

But whatever may be the weight we assign to details of this character, few would be disposed to reckon them as equal in importance to certain matters found in this

[1] iii., 1372.

[2] *Stak* in line 458; *stiked* in line 1811. In the latter the manuscript improperly reads *stikith*. The early printed editions have the correct reading.

[3] Note to page 431.

[4] Lines 3098–3100.

[5] Line 89.

[6] Line 690.

translation which do not appear in the original but do appear in Chaucer. This same condition of things is true, indeed, of most of the phrases that have just been recorded. But the ones now to be considered are much more significant. The somewhat unsavory fate with which Constrained-Abstinence threatens Wicked-Tongue he is eventually to be visited[1] has nothing whatever to support it or suggest it in the French poem. No reader of the prologue to the Summoner's tale needs to be told, however, what it was that the translator had in mind. Again, in the description of the garden near the beginning of the original it is said that no one would find anywhere a better place in which to amuse one's self. In the translation this general statement is turned into a particular one. Instead of being looked for anywhere, a better place, it is declared, could not be found by any one,

"Although he sought oon intyl Inde."[2]

There is no reference whatever to India in the *Roman de la Rose*. But Inde is not only a country which Chaucer is fond of mentioning as marking the extreme of remoteness in one direction, but in the Pardoner's tale he uses essentially the same form of expression as the one just given. In that story the old man who meets with the rioters answers their insolent inquiry as to why he had lived so long, by telling them that in exchange for his age he can find no one willing to give up his youth,

"Though that I walked into Inde."[3]

[1] Lines 7575, 7576. [2] Line 624. [3] Line 260.

Besides these two instances, there is also in the 'Romance of the Rose' a little digression upon Boethius. His treatise is cited in the French poem as an authority for the statement that the earth whereon we dwell is not our real country. But the English version does not stop with this declaration. No sooner is the Latin work named than the writer goes on to make, entirely on his own responsibility, the fuller assertion that in the very place in it to which reference is made there is also

> "maked mencioun
> Of oure countre, pleyn at the eye,
> By teching of philosophie."[1]

The translator was reminded by the remark in his original of a favorite passage of his own in the Latin author —the first metre of the fourth book—and he proceeded to enlarge still further upon it. The additional lines that have just been quoted came certainly from a man who knew the work of Boethius as well as he knew the *Roman de la Rose*. But this same passage, it is to be noted, was also a favorite of Chaucer's. He alludes to it in more than one place. He reproduces its very sentiments in the third stanza of his short piece 'Flee from the Press.' There he says of this world,

> "Her nis non hom, her nis but wildernesse,"

and further tells the pilgrim passing through it to "know thy contree." He makes, besides, a specific reference in the 'House of Fame' to this very poem in the 'Consolation of Philosophy.'[2] Here accordingly is exhibited

[1] Lines 5662–5664.

[2] Lines 972–975.

yet another characteristic in which the translator and Chaucer agree. They were both readers and admirers of Boethius, and in one instance at least admirers of the very same passage in his principal work.

But the argument based upon a comparison of resemblances between the works of Chaucer and the 'Romance of the Rose' does not stop at this point. Large as is the number of these that have been pointed out, it has not included some of the most striking. In fact, when we come to consider the question in its purely literary aspect, we are puzzled where to begin or to end by the embarrassment of riches. Lines are scattered through the whole of the 'Romance of the Rose' which remind us so constantly of Chaucer's manner, even when they do not employ his very words, that the conviction almost forces itself upon the mind that they must have come from the same source. Let us take up in the first place some of those which are used in transition, combined often with a reference to what has gone before. The translation presents us with such lines as these:

"These briddes that I you devise."	670.
"Tho myghtist thou karoles sene."	759.
"Now come I to my tale ageyn."	999.
"Whanne that this lettre, of which I telle."	1543.
"Now have I told thee, in what wise."	2717.
"Now it is tyme shortly that I."	4145.
"As I shal thee heere devise."	5194.
"This book, of which I telle heere."	7106.
"Now have I you declared right."	7168.

No one who is familiar with Chaucer's writings needs to be told that these lines are in his manner, and that they bear a close similarity to many that are found in his admittedly genuine works. It is perfectly legitimate to take the ground that they were imitations. It is not legitimate to explain their appearance on the assumption that they were produced independently by two different authors. The same statement is true also of the poet's method of leaving a subject by putting his refusal to go on in the shape of an interrogatory, as illustrated, for instance, in the following line from the Knight's tale—

"What sholde I al-day of his wo endite?"

This is one of Chaucer's most distinctive mannerisms. Examples of it can be found in abundance in his writings. Yet this very mannerism makes its appearance in the 'Romance of the Rose' in such lines as the following:

"What shulde I more to you devise?" 790.
"What shulde I telle you more of it?" 1387.

There is nothing in the original to authorize this mode of expression in these instances, nor does it as a matter of fact occur very many times in the translation.

We pass now to another class of parallelisms. They vary both in the character and the closeness of their resemblances. They range from the likeness of ideas that resorts simply to the employment of some peculiar word to an almost absolute identity of phraseology. Before taking up the consideration of these, it is desirable to call attention to two facts. One is, that, unless very

exceptional in their nature, illustrations involving alliteration are designedly discarded. These are almost invariably of popular origin. Their occasional occurrence, consequently, in different productions cannot, in fairness, be deemed of much weight in deciding a question of authorship. The second fact is of far more importance. In the examples to be quoted, unless express notice is given to the contrary, the French original is never the source of the wording of the English version. This is to say, that the lines found in the latter are not in these cases a literal rendering of those in the former. Hence, if Chaucer's writings contain phrases and passages that appear also in the 'Romance of the Rose,' the similarity of the two, to whatever cause we ascribe its origin, is not due to the fact that different persons had been led by the language of the French poem to translate the same passage in the same way. To make the matter perfectly plain, it will be sufficient to give a full account of one or two instances in which resemblances of the sort indicated exist. At the beginning of the *Roman de la Rose* there is a picture of the revival of nature in the month of May. The earth, as the translator expresses it, waxeth proud,

"And the pore estat forget,"[1]

which had been its lot during the reign of winter. The phrase "poor estate"[2] is the rendering of the French word *poverté*. The literal English equivalent would therefore be *poverty*. Accordingly, there would be nothing surprising if it were found in versions of this pas-

[1] Contract third person singular present tense for *forgetteth*.

[2] The phrase "pore estate" is used again in line 5636.

sage made by half a dozen different writers. It is, in fact, the very word used by Chaucer himself in the 'Death of Blanche,' where he copies this very description from the *Roman de la Rose*. In that place he says the earth "hadde forgete the povertee" which the winter had made it suffer.[1] The phrase, however, that is used in the translation stands on another footing. It is something altogether individual. It is not likely to have occurred to two different persons turning this line into English. Therefore it becomes noticeable that the poet in his 'Legend of Good Women,' in a passage clearly inspired by this same description in the *Roman de la Rose*, employs this very phrase in rendering the French word *poverté*.

> "Forgeten had the erthe his pore estat
> Of winter"[2]

is what he says. Hence, on the theory that Chaucer and the translator were not the same person, we have an instance of two writers entirely independent of each other hitting upon the same peculiar expression in order to translate the same word—an expression, moreover, which is only very remotely suggested by what is found in the original.

Or, let us take a passage where the resemblance is general rather than particular. In the picture given in the Knight's tale of "the grete Emetreus, the king of Inde," there are one or two details that owe their origin to the description of Mirth found in the *Roman de la Rose*. This is especially true of the characteriza-

[1] Line 410. [2] Line 125. The phrase occurs again in line 1981.

tion of the hair and beard. In the former instance we have the lines,

"His crispe heer lyk ringes was yronne."

"His berd was wel bigonne for to springe."[1]

In the latter occur the lines,

"Crisp was his heer and eek ful bright." 824.

"Of berd unnethe hadde he no thyng, 833.
For it was in the firste spryng."

It is plain that in the description of these two there is no very close resemblance. Still, there is enough to cause him who is familiar with both poems while reading one passage to be reminded of the other. Yet there is nothing in the language of the original to suggest any special phraseology that would occur of itself to different persons engaged in translating the lines. Similarities somewhat remote, such as have here been indicated, can be held with some difficulty, when found in but two instances, as not inconsistent with the theory of divided authorship. But when the instances are extended from two to more than two-score, the maintenance of such a view becomes rather a matter of resolution than of reason. Every additional illustration makes the task harder. This must be the apology for placing side by side as many as possible of these similar passages.

We begin first with the remoter parallelisms. In them the likeness depends upon the collocation of certain words, or upon the employment of a word or phrase somewhat peculiar, or finally upon that general resemblance of expression by which the reader who meets

[1] Lines 1307 and 1315.

with a line in one place has involuntarily called before his mind a similar line elsewhere. This may be due to the fact that there often exists a similarity of movement or of phrase, characteristic of an author, even where there is no actual identity of detail. There are indeed many lines in the 'Romance of the Rose' which suggest Chaucer, though they are not in Chaucer; at least they are not in his writings in the exact form found in this version. Yet they lead to the conviction that if the passages composed were not the work of one man, one of them must have been the work of a disciple who had consciously adopted his master's methods of expression. Those that are given here may be taken for what they are worth. About the actual worth of some of them there will always be difference of opinion. But no one can deny their value as corroboratory proof, however little he may be disposed to regard it as conclusive. It is hard, surely, to attribute to accident the resemblance of phraseology found in the description of the rose by the translator, and in that of the daisy by Chaucer with its veiled reference to the queen. In the former, the rose, in a couplet for which there is no authority in the original, is described as

> "Fresshe, roddy, and fayre of hewe,
> Of coloure ever yliche newe."[1]

In the latter the daisy is spoken of as

> "She that is of alle floures flour;
> * * * * * *
> And ever ylyke fair and fresh of hewe,
> And I love hit, and ever ylyke newe."[2]

[1] Lines 3629, 3630.

[2] *Legend of Good Women*, lines 53–56.

With this introductory statement we come now to the list of examples of the three kinds of remoter resemblances that have been mentioned as existing. They will be given in the order in which they appear in the 'Romance of the Rose.' There are certain of them, it is also to be remarked, for which there is not the slightest authority of any sort in the original. They are purely additions of the translator. In this matter they are therefore of very special importance, and their existence will be indicated by the typographical mark of a dagger.

1. "Now this dreme wol I ryme aryght." 31.
"To tellen al my dreem aright."
House of Fame, line 527.

2. "To make your hertes gaye and lyght." 32.
"Of Love that made hire herte fresshe and gay."
Troilus and Cressida, ii., 922.
"Make his herte light."
Ib., v., 684.
"Wolde han maked any herte lighte."
Franklin's tale, line 186.
"It made alle her hertes for to lighte."
Squire's tale, line 388.

3. †"That with her termes and hir domes." 199.
"In termes hadde he caas and domes alle."
Prologue, line 323.

4. "These olde folk have alwey colde." 411.
"'Thise olde folk kan muchel thyng,' quod she."
Wife of Bath's tale, line 148.

5. "A rose gerlond had she set." 566.
"Hir rose garlond whyte and reed."
House of Fame, line 135.
"A rose gerland, fresh and wel smellinge."
Knight's tale, line 1103.

6. "And she hadde on a cote of grene." 573.
"And he was clad in cote and hood of grene."
Prologue, line 103.

7. "For merye and wel-bigoon was she." 580.
"So was I glad and wel-begon."
Parliament of Fowls, line 171.
"So he was glad and wel-bygon."
Troilus and Cressida, ii., 597.

8. "To here
The briddes how they syngen clere." 618.
"Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they singe."
Nun's Priest's tale, line 381.

9. "I shalle
By ordre tellen you it alle." 712.
"Though I by ordre telle not thise thinges."
Prologue to Monk's tale, line 97.
"Though I hem not by ordre telle."
House of Fame, line 1453.

10. "To angels that ben fethered brighte." 742.
"The pecok with his angels fethers bright."
Parliament of Fowls, line 356.

11. "Wel coude she synge and lustyly." 747.
"How that they singen wel and merily."
Nun's Priest's tale, line 452.

12. "Thanne gan I loken ofte sithe
The shape, the bodies, and the cheres,
The countenance and the maneres
Of alle the folk that daunced there." 812–815.
"But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse
The noble kervyng, and the portreitures,
The shap, the countenaunce, and the figures,
That weren in thise oratories three."
Knight's tale, lines 1056–1059.

13. "Blak as bery." 928.
"Brown as is a berye."
Prologue, line 207.

14. "As whyte as lylye or rose in rys." 1015.
"As whit as is the blosme upon the rys."
Miller's tale, line 138.

15. "In world is noon so faire a wight." 1029.
"In this world was noon so fair on lyve."
Manciple's tale, line 18.

16. †"So faire trow I was never noon." 1110.
"A fairer sey I never noon than she."
Clerk's tale, line 977.

17. "Hir nose * * * was gentyl and tretys." 1216.
"Hir nose tretys."
Prologue, line 152.

18. "Ryght as an hunter can abyde." 1451.
"Ryght as the hunter in the regne of Trace."
Knight's tale, line 780.

19. "Hym loved over any creature." 1475.
"She him trusted over any creature."
Anelida and Arcite, line 91.

20. "And diede withynne a lytel space." 1536.
"And deyed within the thridde morwe."
Death of Blanche, line 214.

21. "Of roses ther were grete wone." 1673.
"And tresor ful gret woon."
Legend of Good Women, line 1652.
"I have of sorwe so grete wone."
Death of Blanche, line 475.

22. †"Thourgh out my woundes large and wide." 1899.
"Ther may be seen the large woundes wide."
Prologue to Man of Law's tale, line 62.

There are expressions somewhat similar in 'Troilus and Cressida,' v., 1047; the Knight's tale, line 897; the Nun's Priest's tale, line 195; the Squire's tale, line 147, and the Franklin's tale, line 688.

23. "Thanne aventures shulle thee falle." 2389.
"Of aventures that whylom han befalle."
Prologue, line 795.

24. "That faire fresshe whan thou maist see." 2461.
"Unto his faire fresshe lady May."
Merchant's tale, line 638.
"Who studieth now but faire freshe May?"
Ib., line 711.

25. †"Though thou for love swelte and swete." 2480.
"No wonder is, thogh that I swelte and swete."
Miller's tale, line 517.

26. "Never for fals suspecioun." 2507.
"O wantrust, ful of fals suspecioun."
Manciple's tale, line 177.

27. †"In syker wise, yee, every other
Shalle helpen as his owne brother." 2884.
"Everich of hem heelp for to armen other,
As frendly as he were his owne brother."
Knight's tale, line 793.

28. †"For the game goth alle amys." 3927.
"Trewely the game is wel bigonne."
Prologue to Miller's tale, line 9.
"If so be the game wente aright."
Miller's tale, line 219.

29. "Sith Bialacoil is at myscheef." 3998.
"He that is at meschief."
Knight's tale, line 1693.

30. "The tour was rounde maad in compas." 4183.
"Round was the shap, in manere of compas."
Knight's tale, line 1031.

31. "Which in awayte lyth day and nyght." 4497.
"That in awayt liggen to mordre men."
Nun's Priest's tale, line 405.

32. "Men shulde hym snybbe bittirly." 4533.
"Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones."
Prologue, line 523.

33. "A fals traitour then shuld I be." 4548.
"Thou art a fals traitour." 6070.
"I am a fals traitour." 6307.
"Arcite, false traitour wikke."
Knight's tale, line 722.
"A! false traitour!"
Reeve's tale, line 349.

34. †"The hoote ernes(t) they al forgeten." 4838.
"The hote ernest is al overblowe."
Legend of Good Women, line 1287.

35. "For soth it is, whom it displease." 5697.
"But for I not to whom it mighte displese."
Nun's Priest's tale, line 440.

36. "They neither love God ne drede." 5773.
"This flour that I so love and drede."
Legend of Good Women, line 211.
"Whom I most drede and love."
Franklin's tale, line 584.

37. †"But clene lyf and devocioun
Makith gode men of religioun." 6194.
"A good man was ther of religioun."
Prologue, line 477.

38. "Heere I turne agayne." 6295.
"I wol turne again to Adriane."
Legend of Good Women, line 2181.
"Now wol I torne agayne to my sentence."
Nun's Priest's tale, line 394.
"Torne we to Troylus ageyn."
Troilus and Cressida, iii., 219.
"Torne we ageyn to Troylus."
Ib., iii. 1583.

39. "Therof geve I lytel tale." 6375.
"Litel tale hath he told."
Nun's Priest's tale, line 298.

40. "I yeve not of her harm a bene." 6464.
"They yeven noght a leek
For no fame."
House of Fame, line 1708.

41. "I entremete not of her fare." 6498.
"I hate of thee thy nice fare!
Why entremete of that thou *ne* hast to don?"
Troilus and Cressida, i., 1025.

42. †"Yit Austin gabbeth not of this." 6700.
"I gabbe not."
Nun's Priest's tale, line 246.
"Gabbe I of this?"
Boethius, Book ii., Prose 5.

43. "What! wened he that I were wood?" 6790.
"What! wenestow make an ydiot of oure dame?"
Prologue to Wife of Bath's tale, line 311.

44. "Such folk drinken gret misese." 6807.
"Oure wreche is this oure owen wo to drynke."
Troilus and Cressida, ii., 784.
"Men drynken often peyne and gret distresse."
Ib., iii., 1216.

45. "Maken thurgh oure golet glide." 7046.
"That may go thurgh the golet softe and swote."
Pardoner's tale, line 81.

46. "That men shulle here hym crie and rore." 7053.
"Up he gaf a roryng and a cry."
Merchant's tale, line 1120.

47. "Thanking hym, gan on his knees loute." 7334.
"The fifte route
That to this lady gonne loute."
House of Fame, line 1704.

48. †"Sothly, what so men hym calle." 7455.
"Sooth to seyn, I noot how men hym calle."
Prologue, line 284.

49. "And skath is." 7565.
"That was scathe."
Prologue, line 446.

Here, then, are about fifty passages of varying degrees of similarity in the language of Chaucer and of the 'Romance of the Rose.' They consist principally in the use in both of somewhat peculiar words or peculiar phrases. Even when it might reasonably have been expected that those of them which are found in the English version were nothing but literal renderings of the original, it is rarely the case that there is anything due to that quarter beyond the suggestion of the idea. In a few instances, indicated by a typographical mark, there is not even so much as that. In fact, the example given of *tretis*, as applied to the nose, is almost the only expression that is taken directly from the French poem. They are, consequently, the coinages of the translator. Some of the resemblances to the lines in Chaucer's writings it would be fair to regard as the result of accident. They are words or phrases that might have occurred to any author. Similar ones may not improbably be found scattered about to some extent in the writings of the fourteenth century. Whatever weight is to be attached to them is dependent, therefore, mainly upon their number, and rarely upon their individual significance. They

remind us of Chaucer. They belong to his style of expression. But the utmost that will be claimed for them is, that they lend an air of probability to the view that he was the author of the present version, or at least that the one who translated it was under his influence. It is hardly probable that any candid investigator will object to this moderate statement.

There may be such, however. By those who take this ground there are still closer similarities of expression to be encountered. Of these there will be first considered a few in which the French text not only suggests the English version, but furnishes almost the very words. It does the same thing also for Chaucer. It is certainly some evidence of the identical nature of the genius of the two men, if they were two, that they should have been inspired to follow the original so closely as to fall into almost exactly the same translation of the same lines. The difference between them, in fact, is often no more than the additional syllables required to convert a verse of four accents into one of five. The following are the passages in which the original is strictly responsible not only for the sentiments, but largely for the words, of the renderings found in the two different places:

"Hir court hath many a losengere." 1050.
"For in your court is many a losengeour."
Legend of Good Women, line 352.

"Many a fals flatour
Is in your courtes and many a losengeour."
Nun's Priest's tale, line 506.

"Thorough myn ye unto myn herte
The takel smote." 1728.
"I was hurt right now thurghout myn ye
Into myn herte."

Knight's tale, line 238.

"For she knew alle the olde daunce." 4300.
"For she coude of that art the olde daunce."

Prologue, line 476.

"For ofte goode predicacioun
Cometh of evel entencioun." 5764.
"For certes many a predicacioun
Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun."

Prologue to Pardoner's tale, lines 121, 122.

"My purchace is bettir than my rente." 6838.
"His purchas was wel bettre than his rente."

Prologue, line 256.

"For alle yede oute at oon ere,
That in that other she dide lere." 5152.
"Oon ere it herde, at tother out it wente."

Troilus and Cressida, iv., 434.

There remains now a series of closer resemblances. These extend to parts of lines, to whole lines, and in a few instances to couplets. An exact line of demarcation cannot always be drawn between the two classes of parallelisms. Reasons which would lead one man to assign particular expressions to either might not always be apparent to another. Still, in general, it is safe to say that the parallelisms which have previously been given might, by a liberal exertion of charitable feeling, pass under the name of imitations. Those that are to be mentioned would inevitably subject a modern author to an altogether graver charge. Before taking up the specific illustra-

tions of these almost identical passages, it may be well to call attention to another characteristic of the poet's style which likewise distinguishes that of the translator. This is Chaucer's tendency to make use of comparisons which strike us at times as odd and almost homely. He employs them when speaking disparagingly of the value of any special thing. A straw, a bean, a mite, a leek, a rush, a vetch, a haw, are the objects he is in the habit of mentioning when he wishes to express an unusually derogatory estimate. It was a practice adopted by his professed disciples, though none of them perhaps ever equalled him in the extent or the singularity of the usage. It is the colloquial character of his style that enabled him to resort to it without offence. In the case of his imitators it occasionally produces a sense of incongruity. Something of this feeling comes over us when, for illustration, we find Spenser representing the Red Cross Knight as not caring a pin for the stern looks of any living creature. The practice was somewhat common in Chaucer's time among the writers of the metrical romances. He himself, however, was influenced more particularly by the *Roman de la Rose*. In this expressions similar to his own, though rarely the same, occur with a good deal of frequency. Such expressions, in consequence, would naturally appear in the English version of that poem. They are to be found there. But the singular thing about them is, that in most instances they appear in places where there is no authority in the original for their appearing at all. They are, therefore, strictly speaking, imitations. But about them there is one further noteworthy fact to be observed. The trans-

lator evinces a taste for the employment of *mite*, *leek*, and *bean*,[1] which happen also to be favorite comparisons of Chaucer himself.

One example, however, is too peculiar not to be quoted in full. In the speech of False-Semblant in the 'Romance of the Rose' he expresses his utter dislike to acting as confessor for the poor. The reason he gives for his unwillingness is, as it appears in the original, that their estate is neither attractive nor noble.[2] The translator renders it vigorously, but somewhat peculiarly, by the following line:

"Her astate is not worth an hen."[3]

But just as peculiarly does the bride in the Wife of Bath's tale speak of the claim to gentility that is made by those who are indebted for it to the wealth that has come down from previous generations.

"Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen,"[4]

is her contemptuous comment upon their pretensions. It must be admitted that the expression is a somewhat singular one to be used by two authors independently. Gower, the proper, the respectable, who on a few occasions does condescend to employ 'straw' and 'rush' for this purpose of comparison,[5] could never have been induced to sanction by his usage an example of so gro-

[1] *Leek* is found in lines 4830, 5374, 5730; *bean* in line 6464; and *mite* in lines 5762 and 7550. In all of these instances there is no authority for a comparison in the French original, except in the last one mentioned, and there the comparison in it is not to a mite, but to the bark of an oak-tree.

[2] "Lor estat n'est ne bel ne gent."

[3] Line 6856.

[4] Line 256.

[5] Vol. i., p. 160; vol. ii., pp. 59, 97 (Pauli).

tesque a sort. To sink even to the level of the word 'bean' would have been an impossibility in his case. Several other comparisons there are, which are common to Chaucer and the translator. Two, for instance, are "dumb as a stone"[1] and "white as milk;"[2] but there is about them nothing of the startling nature of the one just given. It ought to be added, however, that one distinctive Chaucerian phrase, "as fresh as May," appears also in the 'Romance of the Rose.' For it, likewise, there is no authority in the original.[3]

It is, indeed, characteristic of the parallelisms that are now to be noted, that there is rarely anything in the French work to suggest even remotely the special phraseology employed. Many of them, also, are distinctive peculiarities of Chaucer's style. They occur not once in his writings, but several times. They are therefore often entitled to a weight quite disproportionate to their length, consisting, as they sometimes do, of only a part of a line. I throw out of consideration some of the shorter phrases, such as *my sorwes sore*, *my peynes smerte*, *to make feest*, or the use of the past participle of *fulfil* in such phrases as *fulfilled of ire* or *of honour*, or ones essentially similar. They are common to the translation and to the writings of Chaucer. They are, moreover, common in both. Some of them, however, are found in Gower. Others are likely to have been employed by everybody, even though there should appear no evi-

[1] "Still as a stone" is very common in Chaucer, Gower, and in the *Romance of the Rose;* but "dumb as a stone" is not found in Gower.

[2] Line 1196 of *Romance of the Rose*, and Prologue, line 358.

[3] *Monk's tale*, line 130; *Squire's tale*, line 273; and *Romance of the Rose*, line 2277.

dence that they were elsewhere employed by anybody. On the other hand, there are certain of these expressions that are a mark rather of individual style than of general usage. In the translation, for instance, Danger tells the lover,

† "Love where that thee list." 3447.

Here it may be remarked that the *that* must have been, as often happened in manuscripts, an insertion of the transcriber. Besides being unnecessary to the sense, it destroys the measure. But exactly in a similar way, and in almost the same words, Arcite in the Knight's tale tells Palemon,

"Love if thee list."[1]

As has been remarked, and as it is seen in the example just cited, these resemblances sometimes extend to no more than a part of a line. It is the points of similarity that are to be taken into account, and not the points of dissimilarity. In most of these parallelisms we are under the necessity of comparing a line of eight syllables with one of ten. This, from the very nature of things, involves, almost as much as does the ryme, a difference of wording. Yet how slight, upon the whole, is the effect of either or of both the following examples will show:

1. "Wel coude he peynte, I undertake." 174.
"Wel couthe he peynten lyfly that it wroghte."
Knight's tale, line 1229.

[1] Line 325. Compare "Love hire as thee liste," in *Troilus and Cressida*, i., 679.

2. "In worlde nys wyght so harde of herte
That hadde sene hir sorowes smerte,
That nolde have had of her pytye." 333–335.

"In this world there nys so hard an herte,
That nolde have rewed on hire peynes smerte."
Troilus and Cressida, iv., 1140, 1141.

"In al this world ther nys so cruel herte
That hire hadde herd compleynen in hire sorwe,
That nold han wopen for hire peynes smerte."
Ib., v., 722–724.

3. "Hym luste not to playe." 344.
"Me list ful evele pleye."
Knight's tale, line 269.
"Me luste not pleye."
Troilus and Cressida, v., 987.
"Me list right evel to pleye."
Death of Blanche, line 239.

4. "God kepe it fro care!" 505.
"God shilde you fro care!"
Shipman's tale, line 264.
"God geve your herte care."
Troilus and Cressida, iii., 1565.

5. "Ne of hir answer daungerous." 591.
"Ne of his speche daungerous."
Prologue, line 517.

6. †"Now also wisly God me blesse!" 632.
"So God you blesse!"
Prologue to Nun's Priest's tale, line 22.
Prologue to Merchant's tale, line 28.
"Wherefor, also God me blesse!"
House of Fame, line 629.

7. "I may not telle you al at ones." 710.
"I may not al at ones speke in ryme."
Legend of Good Women, line 102.
"I may not telle you as now."
Death of Blanche, line 216.

8. "I pray to God evere falle hir faire!" 798.
"I prey to God that ever falle her faire!"
Legend of Good Women, line 277.

9. "He may hope his soris sounde." 966.
"Non other help, my sores for to sounde."
Anelida and Arcite, line 242.

10. "As fer as I have remembraunce." 996.
"As fer as thou hast remembraunce."
Parson's tale, vol. ii., p. 259 (ed. Gilman).

11. "As helpe me God." { 1028. †2732.
Death of Blanche, lines 838, 1277.
"As helpe me God."
Shipman's tale, line 170.
"As helpe me God."
Prologue to Wife of Bath's tale, lines 201, 596, 605, 805.

12. "Yvel achyved mote they be." 1068.
"Yvel moot he cheve."
Canon's Yeoman's tale, line 214.

13. "For in this world is noon it lyche." 1073.
"In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk."
Prologue, line 412.
"That in this world ne was ther noon it liche."
Squire's tale, line 54.

14. †"I sey no more." 1249.
"I sey no more."
Parliament of Fowls, line 14.
"I sey na more."
Pardoner's tale, line 222.
"I seye na more."
Squire's tale, line 281.

15. "God yeve hir (right) good grace." 1255.
"God yeve it harde grace."
Prologue to Canon's Yeoman's tale, line 112.

16. †"Of beaute wot I noon his pere." 1300.

"As to my doom, there is noon that is here
Of eloquence that shal be thy pere."

Prologue to Franklin's tale, line 6.

"In al the lond of crowyng was noon his pere."

Nun's Priest's tale, line 30.

"In al this world of falshede nis his peer."

Prologue to Canon's Yeoman's tale, line 426.

17. †"Now God that sittith in mageste." 1339.

"I prey to God that sit in magestee."

Prologue to Wife of Bath's tale, line 826.

"He wende God that sit in mageste."

Monk's tale, line 178.

18. †"Sprong up the sote grene gras." 1425.

"Upon the softe and swote grene gras."

Legend of Good Women, line 225 (first version).

"Upon the smale softe swote gras."

Ib., line 118 (regular version).

19. "And floures yelowe, white and rede." 1433.

"Fressche floures blew, and white, and rede."

Troilus and Cressida, ii., 51.

"With floures white, blewe, and yelwe and rede."

Parliament of Fowls, line 186.

20. †"There lay none other remedye." 1480.

"Ther nas noon other remedye."

Knight's tale, line 358.

"He saugh noon other remedye."

Monk's tale, line 142.

"Ther is noon other remede."

Troilus and Cressida, v., 61.

21. "Therfore God held it ferme and stable." 1500.

"But if he be so ferme and stable." 5226.

"I holde it ferme and stable."

Merchant's tale, line 255.

"Al your plesaunce ferme and stable I holde."
Clerk's tale, line 608.

22. "That shadwid was with braunches grene." 1511.
"And shadwid wel with blosmy bowes grene."
Troilus and Cressida, ii., 821.

23. †"And doun on knees he gan to falle." 1514.
"They gonne doun on knees falle."
House of Fame, line 1534.
"And doun upon hir knees she gan to falle."
Clerk's tale, line 236.

24. †"That shortly al the sothe to telle." 1528.
"And shortely al the sothe for to seye."
Troilus and Cressida, iv., 953.

25. "For if her deth be yow to wite." 1541.
"A womman that were of his deth to wyte."
Troilus and Cressida, ii., 1279.
"Here is she that is youre deth to wyte."
Ib., iii., 63.

26. "My lyf, my deth is in youre honde." 1955.
"For lyf and deth, withouten wene,
Is in his hande." 4596.
"My lyf, my deth hool in thin honde I leye."
Troilus and Cressida, i., 1053.

27. "I wol ben hool at youre devis." 1974.
"We wol reuled ben at his devis."
Prologue, line 816.

28. †"O thing warne I thee." 2009.
"Oon thing warne I thee."
Friar's tale, line 215.

"O thing warne I yow."
Prologue to Pardoner's tale, line 91.
Merchant's tale, line 172.

"O thing I wil warne thee."
House of Fame, line 1068.

29. "As man abasshed wonder sore." 2413.
"But wonder sore he was abaist."
Troilus and Cressida, iii., 1122.
"So sore abasshed was she."
Parliament of Fowls, line 447.

30. †"Of hem that bien love so dere." 2452.
"Polixene that boghten love so dere."
Legend of Good Women, line 258.
"Your love I bye it al to dere."
Anelida and Arcite, line 255.

31. "Holde that in ful gret deynte." 2677.
"Treweliche I holde it gret deynte."
Troilus and Cressida, ii., 164.
"Of thy speche I have greet deyntee."
Prologue to Franklin's tale, line 9.

32. "To hem that in my (Love's) lace be bounde." 2792.
"The more I am bounden in Love's laas." 3648.
See also line 5127.
"Him so narwe bounden in his (Love's) las."
Legend of Good Women, line 600.
"Love had hym so bounden in a snare."
Troilus and Cressida, i., 663.

33. "Thou shalt holde thee wel apayed." 2891.
"That ye shal holde you paied ful well." 6035.
"Thus held hem ech of other wel apayed."
Troilus and Cressida, iii., 421.
"Every man chit and halt him yvel apayd."
Prologue to Canon's Yeoman's tale, line 368.

34. "Now have I declared thee alle oute." 2935.
"Now have I yow declared what she hyghte."
Second Nun's tale, line 119.
"Now sith I have declared yow."
Parson's tale, vol. ii., p. 138 (ed. Gilman).

35. †"God yeve hym sorwe!" 3027.
"God geve hem sorwe!"
Troilus and Cressida, v., 1781.
"God yeve me sorwe."
Prologue to Monk's tale, line 62.
"God yeve thee sorwe."
Prologue to Manciple's tale, line 15.

36. "It were neither skile ne right." 3120.
"Resoun hadde both skile and right." 4543.
"Taking no kepe to skile nor right." 5302.
"Al have he to the capoun skile and right."
Legend of Good Women, line 1392.
"As it was skile and right."
Man of Law's tale, line 610.

37. "He com criande as he were wood." 3138.
"He ran anoon as he were wood." 3823.
"Renne and crye as thou were wood."
House of Fame, line 202.
"Thanne wolde he speke and crye as he were wood."
Prologue, line 636.
"He cride and knokked as that he were wood."
Miller's tale, line 250.
"The cartere smoot and cryde as he were wood."
Friar's tale, line 244.

38. "Noon herte may thenke, ne tunge seyn." 3183.
"Ther may no tonge telle or herte thinke."
Merchant's tale, line 97.
"Tonge may nat telle ne herte thynke."
Parson's tale, vol. ii., p. 250 (ed. Gilman).

39. † "Hir crownet
Was ful of riche stones fret." 3204.
"Ne juwel fretted ful of riche stones."
Legend of Good Women, line 1117.

40. †"Ful meke of port." 3403.
"Of his port as meeke as is a mayde."
Prologue, line 69.

41. †"Wel wot ye that love is free." 3432.
"Think wel that love is free."
Knight's tale, line 748.

42. "He shulde yit rewen on thi peyne." 3460.
"Than preye I thee to rewe upon my pyne."
Knight's tale, line 1524.
"Til fresshe May wol rewen on his peyne."
Merchant's tale, line 538.
"This drof me for to rewe upon your peyne."
Troilus and Cressida, iii., 994.

43. "If Love hath caught hym in his lace." 3533.
†"So are they caught in Loves lace." 5093.
"As he that hath ben caught ofte in his (Love's) las."
Knight's tale, line 959.
"Alle thise folk so caught were in hir las."
Ib., line 1093.

44. †"Put him hooly in youre grace." 3556.
"I am al in youre grace."
Troilus and Cressida, iii., 1176.

45. †"The estres of the swote place." 3626.
"The estres of the grisly place."
Knight's tale, line 1113.

46. "So God me spede." 3667.
"So God me spede."
House of Fame, line 1012.
"So God me spede."
Troilus and Cressida, ii., 744.

47. † "To him shortly in a clause
She seide." 3726.
"Now have I told you shortly in a clause."
Prologue, line 715.
"He hath considered shortly in a clause."
Knight's tale, line 905.

48. †"So was I ful of joye and blisse." 3765.
"So have I joy and blisse."
Nun's Priest's tale, line 246.
"So have I joye or blis."
Prologue to Wife of Bath's tale, line 830.
"Thus in joye and blisse I lete hem dwelle."
Franklin's tale, line 371.
"I am so ful of joye and of solas."
Nun's Priest's tale, line 350.

49. "But fledde awey for verrey drede." 3860.
"He fledde awey for verray sorwe and shame."
Prologue to Canon's Yeoman's tale, line 149.

50. †"In Loves servyse for to endure." 3884.
"In your servise thus I wol endure."
Legend of Good Women, line 2033.

51. †"For hym fulle ofte I synge 'Allas!'" 4104.
"For I may synge 'Allas and weylawey!'"
Shipman's tale, line 118.
"Whereas thise bacheleris synge 'Allas!'"
Merchant's tale, line 30.

52. "A fairer saugh no man with sight." 4173.
"That fairer saugh ther never man with ye."
Legend of Good Women, line 1600.

53. †"But-if she do hir bisy cure." 4222.
"Everich of hem did his besy cure."
Parliament of Fowls, line 369.

Bisy cure is met elsewhere several times in Chaucer, as, for instance, in the Knight's tale, line 1995; Man of Law's tale, line 90; and 'Troilus and Cressida,' iii., 1042.

54. †"I pray God yeve him evel chaunce." 4274.
"I prey to God so yeve him right good chaunce."
Prologue to Parson's tale, line 20.
"God yeve thee good chaunce."
Prologue to Canon's Yeoman's tale, line 40.

55. †"She (Fortune) can writhe hir heed awey." 4359.
"From Troilus she (Fortune) gan hire brighte face
Awey to wrythe."
Troilus and Cressida, iv., 8.

56. "It wol my bane bee." 4491.
"That wol my bane be."
Knight's tale, line 239.
"It wol her bane be."
Complaint of Mars, line 196.
"It wol my bane be."
Troilus and Cressida, iv., 907.

The same phrase can also be found in this last-mentioned poem in line 320 of the second book, in lines 333 and 774 of the fourth book, in the 'Complaint of Mars' in line 196, and in line 2659 of the 'Legend of Good Women.'

57. †"Foule hir bifalle." 4494.
"Foule mot thee falle."
Prologue to Manciple's tale, line 40.
"Now foule falle hire."
Troilus and Cressida, iv., 462.
"Fayre yow bifalle."
Prologue to Parson's tale, line 68.

58. †"As God forbede." 4589.
"As God forbede."
Troilus and Cressida, iv., 157.

59. †"A fooles belle is soone runge." 5266.
"Thorghout the world my belle shal be ronge."
Troilus and Cressida, v., 1062.

60. †"So God me se." 5693.
"God you see."
Summoner's tale, line 467; Pardoner's tale, line 253.
"God him see."
Man of Law's tale, line 58.

61. †"Suche soules goth to the devel of helle." 5810.
"Many a wrecche * * * shal go to the devel of helle."
Parson's tale, vol. ii., p. 253 (ed. Gilman).

62. "Barouns, take heede of my sentence." 6138.
"Foules, take hede of my sentence."
Parliament of Fowls, line 383.

63. "If God nyl done it socour." 6281.
"To doon him socour."
Legend of Good Women, line 1476.

64. "Thou shalt not streyne me a del." 6406.
"If his witing streyneth nevere a del."
Nun's Priest's tale, line 429.

65. "God so wys be my socour!" 6433.
"God so wys be my savacioun!"
Prologue to Wife of Bath's tale, line 621.
Troilus and Cressida, ii., 381 and 563.

66. "For I am out of thi grucching." 6439.
"For we been out of here correccioun."
Friar's tale, line 31.

67. "Han of his myscheef somme pitee." 6731.
"O, haveth of my deth pitee."
House of Fame, line 325.

68. †"And also God my soule blesse!" 6767.
"God his soule blesse!"
Prologue to Wife of Bath's tale, line 525.
Nun's Priest's tale, line 475.
"Also wisly God my soule blesse!"
Prologue to tale of Melibeus, line 4.
"And also God your soule blesse!"
House of Fame, line 1612.
"So God my soule blesse."
Prologue to Manciple's tale, line 21.

69. "Be wroth or blithe whoso be." 6773.
"Whoso be wroth or blythe."
Parliament of Fowls, line 504.

70. "To wynnen is alwey myn entente." 6837.
"Myn entente is nat but for to winne."
Prologue to Pardoner's tale, line 117.

71. "For it is wonder longe to here." 7208.
"I trowe it were a longe thynge for to here."
Troilus and Cressida, iii., 495.
"If it nere to long to here."
Knight's tale, line 17.

72. †"That false traytouresse untrewe." (Fortune.) 7389.
"The false trayteresse perverse." (Fortune.)
Death of Blanche, line 813.

73. †"And that is sene." 7554.
"And that was sene."
Death of Blanche, line 413.

74. "This knowe ye, sir, as wel as I." 7616.
"For this ye knowen also wel as I."
Prologue, line 730.

The following parallelisms with which we conclude demand special attention. In the first place, nothing apparently but the necessity of having one line longer than the other prevented the expression from being almost absolutely the same throughout. As it is, there is similarity enough to forbid the idea that they could have originated from different sources.

75. †"Freend of affect and freend of cheere." 5486.
"Frend of affect and frend of countenance."
Fortune, line 34.

With this should be compared a couplet that contains the same idea in the 'Romance of the Rose,' and the use of its rymes in the 'House of Fame:'

"Clerly for to se
Hym that is freend in existence
From hym that is by apparence." 5550.
"Allas! what harm doth apparence,
Whan it is fals in existence!"
House of Fame, line 265.

This resemblance is made the more noteworthy because the words that form these rymes do not appear in the French original.

In the second example there is a description of the vengeance that shall be taken by women upon the rich. They shall brew them such a drink, it says,

76. "If that they falle into her laas,
That they for woo mowe seyn 'Allas!'" 6030.

The expression in the last line is widely different from the corresponding one in the French original, which means no more than that misfortune will befall them.[1] It is, however, not unfrequent in Chaucer. In the description of the power of Venus in the Knight's tale, both the idea and the phraseology of the couplet just quoted are reproduced:

"Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir las,
Til they for wo ful ofte seyde, 'allas!'" 1094.

The third example is perhaps even more remarkable still. It is on the value of time and the impossibility of recovering it when once lost, a subject upon which Chaucer waxes eloquent in more than one passage. In the 'Romance of the Rose' the translator adds the following couplet to the words of the original which express this sentiment, and which he has already duly rendered in the English version:

77. †"For tyme lost, as men may see,
For no thyng may recured be." 5124.

[1] "Si puéent en lor laz chéoir,
Qu'il lor en devra meschéoir."—Line 11,664 (Michel).

But in the 'House of Fame' the same idea reappears in essentially the same language:

> "For tyme ylost, this knowen ye,
> By no way may recovered be."

A careful comparison of the various lines quoted from the English version with the corresponding lines of the French poem will enable us to make certain statements that deserve consideration. In three or four instances the resemblances are so close that the latter, while not directly responsible for the wording of the former, might fairly be said to have led naturally to its adoption. But it is only in three or four instances that this is the case. In the great majority of examples, while the idea conveyed is contained in the original, there is nothing found in it to suggest the peculiar form of expression which is given to its representation in the translation. Several illustrations of this fact have already been furnished. In addition to those already cited, take the common Chaucerian phrase "it wol my bane be" which appears in this version.[1] A literal rendering of the corresponding passage of the *Roman de la Rose* would have been, 'I can nevermore live.'[2] It is certain, therefore, that it was not from that quarter that the translator derived his peculiar phraseology. But a statement of a similar nature can be made in regard to most of the other lines cited and compared. Moreover, there remain nearly fifty examples, indicated by the typographical mark, in which ordinarily there is absolutely nothing in the original to give even an intimation of what is found in the English version.

[1] Line 4491.

[2] "Jà vivre ne puis."—Line 4118.

Some of them have the further distinction of being among the phrases specially characteristic of Chaucer's style. The resemblances, therefore, between them and passages in the poet's undisputed works become hard to explain upon the theory that they were the production of two independent writers. The state of literary morals was very different in the fourteenth century from what it has been in any other period of the world's history if men could then help themselves to each other's phrases and lines in the way that has been done here, if we go upon the assumption that Chaucer and the translator of the *Roman de la Rose* are two different persons. That the poet's disciples and successors should use his peculiarities of expression, and even his lines, would not be surprising. Whenever done, it was done openly and avowedly. But it never in any case took place upon the scale exhibited in this poem. The source, too, was so well known that no charge of intentional deception could lie against him who adopted any phrase or passage, even if he failed to make mention of his authority. Nor, moreover, did Chaucer's imitators put themselves into competition with him by proceeding to translate the very work upon which he had been engaged. Had they set out to do so, that very fact would of itself have shut them off from using his expressions and mannerisms.

But even the remarkable list of parallel phrases and lines which has just been given is not all. There still remains for consideration another characteristic of Chaucer's style which is of importance in the discussion of this question. It is the tendency he displays to use two words practically synonymous to denote the same thing.

This is not absolutely peculiar to the poet. Our early literature will furnish a number of examples of this disposition on the part of the users of language. It may have originated from the desire and perhaps the necessity of expressing the same fact or thought by employing one word from the native and one from the Romance element which had come together to form the vocabulary of the English tongue. But if it so originated, it did not so continue. Its use soon outgrew any possible need as a help to comprehension. In what, for instance, are the most frequent of these combinations in Chaucer—the phrases *lief and dear* and *blithe and glad* —the native element is exclusively represented. The usage, as has been remarked, is not peculiar to the poet. But the extent of the usage is very peculiar. It covers the whole period of his literary life. It is seen in his latest work as well as in his earliest, in his prose as well as in his poetry. It is seen, moreover, not only in his original matter, but in his translation where there would appear to be no occasion for its employment. Every one who examines carefully the poet's version of Boethius will be struck by the frequency with which a single noun or verb of the Latin is rendered into English by two which have little or no difference in their meaning. In fact, Chaucer's fondness for this usage led him at times to extend it from words to phrases, in such a way as to give to his expression an unmistakable character of tautology. In the 'Death of Blanche' we have such a line as

"Go now faste and hy thee blyve."[1]

[1] Line 152.

A little before in this poem, Ceyx, the drowned king, is spoken of as one

"That lyth ful pale and nothing rody."[1]

In the prologue to the Manciple's tale the Cook is mentioned in the same way as being "full pale and nothing red."

It is, however, naturally in the doubling of words with essentially the same meaning that this peculiarity of style is most constantly displayed. Illustrations of this usage are abundant. They are, in truth, so abundant that were it not that no attention appears to have been called to the fact, an apology would almost be needed for introducing examples. For the purpose of enforcing the point I shall not attempt to go outside of two of his productions, the 'Legend of Good Women' and the tale of Melibeus. Even in the latter the selections will be taken from only a third of the work. The former presents us as instances of this usage such combinations in the same line as *effect* and *charge*, *carole* and *dance*, *warm* and *hoot*, *blisful* and *fain*, *travail* and *labour*, *leiser* and *tyme*, *meed* and *guerdon*, *joye* and *solas*, *roum* and *space*, *afered* and *awhaped*, *strengthe* and *myght*, *port* and *manere*, *wey* and *path*, *hool* and *sound*, and *sepulture* and *buryinge*.[2] In the first third of the tale of Melibeus we have *wepe* and *crie*, *joyous* and *glad*, *licence* and *assent*, *many time* and *ofte*, *hool* and *sound*, *a hevy thyng* and *a heigh matiere*, *espie* and *wacche*, *leyser* and *espace*, *fresshe* and *newe*, *conseil* and *deliberacioun*, *establissed* and *or-*

[1] Line 143.

[2] See lines 620, 687, 914, 1137, 1509, 1552, 1662, 1966, 1999, 2321, 2326, 2453, 2463, 2468, 2553.

deyned, *crieth* and *clatereth*, *lordshipe* and *maistrie*, *hyde* and *hele*, *discrete* and *wise*, *assayed* and *preved*, *ire* and *wratthe*, *irous* and *wrooth*, *angre* and *ire*, *cloos* and *stille*, *wille* and *entente*, *enforcen* and *encreescen*, *talent* and *affeccion*, *the moore partie* and *the gretter nombre*, *congregacions* and *multitudes*, *wisely* and *discretely*, *heighly* and *sovereynly*, *encreesceth* and *aggreggeth*, *pees* and *accord*, and *ful avysely* and *with greet deliberacion*. These examples are taken from pieces far apart in their general scope and character. They represent also the prose and the poetry of Chaucer, the translated as well as the original matter he produced. The results thus obtained may fairly be deemed characteristic. That they are so it is in the power of every one to discover for himself by the examination of any of his works of any length.

This use of words synonymous or nearly synonymous, as exhibited upon the scale here indicated, is assuredly a very distinguishing peculiarity of style. The practice crops out occasionally in other writers. In no one of them, however, is it common enough to attract special attention. There are, perhaps, a dozen examples of it in Gower. There are far fewer than even this small number in Barbour. I know, indeed, of no author in the whole range of English literature—at least no author of any prominence—by whom this usage has been carried to an extent approaching even remotely the usage of Chaucer. This statement, however, will need correction if the poet and the translator of the *Roman de la Rose* are two different persons. In the practice of the latter there exists the same disposition to employ synonymous

expressions. It is displayed likewise on the same scale and in the same manner. Like Chaucer, he frequently renders one foreign word by two English ones. Like Chaucer, his combinations extend sometimes to phrases. If Ceyx is described by the one as "ful pale and nothing rody," so by the other Sorrow is described as "ful yolare and nothing bright." The original supplies the 'yellow' of this picture, but the 'nothing bright' is the addition of the translator. The moment we come across such a line the student of Chaucer feels himself at once upon familiar ground. He who desires proof of the usage of words essentially synonymous in the 'Romance of the Rose' will not be embarrassed by the scarcity of examples. The poem furnishes us, in the same line in each case, such combinations as *wrathe* and *yre*, *compasse* and *caste*, *lene* and *megre*, *malice* and *maltalent*, *longe* and *high* (of stature), *thryve* and *thee*, *vertu gret* and *mochel might*, *hevy* and *nothyng lyght*, *fresh* and *newe*, *glad* and *joyfulle*, *compleysshen* and *fulfille*, *robe* and *garnement*, *foote* and *daunce*, *large* and *free*, *hoole* and *quyte*, *domme* and *withoute spekyng*, *morne* and *compleyne*, *stryf* and *affray*, *lyve* and *laste*, *shape* and *fourme*, *drede* and *doute*, *stature* and *highte*, *leef* and *deere*, *threte* and *manace*, *tremblede* and *quook*, *curteys* and *hende*, *paye* and *plese*, *covert* and *close*, *perceyve* and *see*, *biholde* and *see*, *drede* and *feere*, *mystrust* and *suspecioun*, *causeles* and *withoute enchesoun*, *he slombred* and *a nap he tok*, *withoute desert* and *causeles*, *to gon at large* and *to be free*, *purpose* and *entente*, *fredom* and *fraunchise*, *labour* and *travaille*, *ferme* and *stable*, *wise* and *sage*, *change* and *variaunce*, *catel* and *good*, *poverte* and *indigence*, *chapman* and *marchaunt*, *pore*

and *indigent*, *clene* and *pure*, *fool* and *nyce*, *crye* and *rore*, and *counsel* and *rede*.[1] Additions could be made to the list here presented. Enough assuredly have been given to establish the fact of the practice and to furnish some conception of the extent of its prevalence. Moreover, it is worthy of mention that these combinations of synonymous expressions run through the whole of the 'Romance of the Rose.' They are limited to no particular part or parts. This of itself is sufficient to dispose of the theory that the translation could have been the work of different hands. It tasks human credulity heavily to believe that a peculiarity of style, so marked as the one just discussed, could possibly have been exhibited by two contemporary authors. To suppose it to have been the work of three or more is an assumption that can owe its existence only to whim and has nothing whatever to do with the reason.

It is now time to sum up the evidence that has been furnished by the consideration of the literary aspects of this question, and to state the conclusions to which it directly leads. In the 'Romance of the Rose' and in the writings of Chaucer we find constantly the same peculiarities of diction, the same phrases, the same turns of expression and methods of transition. In a good many instances we find essentially the same lines and sometimes even the same couplets. In short, everything that is especially distinctive of the one is also distinctive of

[1] Lines 148, 194, 218, 273, 817, 1067, 1087, 1105, 1560 (1578, 1914), 2015, 2132, 2256, 2323, 2332, 2375, 2492, 2503, 2549, 2726, 2810, 2936, 2983, 3129, 3161, 3163, 3345, 3599, 3637, 3714, 3735 (4112), 3843, 3981, 3982, 4005, 4269, 4512, 4903, 4906, 4994, 5226, 5383, 5438, 5439 (5457), 5477, 5591, 5695, 5798, 5945, 7053, 7326.

the other. It is not two or three instances of similarity that have been pointed out, but scores and scores of them. He who could discover so many clear cases of resemblance in any two authors of modern times would be fully justified in insisting that plagiarism on a grand scale had been committed by somebody. In view of this large number of parallelisms, there is no escape from one of the three following inferences: Either the translator borrowed from Chaucer, or Chaucer borrowed from the translator, or Chaucer and the translator were one and the same person. To one of the first two of these inferences those who deny the genuineness of the 'Romance of the Rose' must resort. There is, as has been indicated, more than imitation involved in the question. There is actual plagiarism. Of the latter, few admirers of the poet will concede the possibility of his having been guilty. To repeat his own phrases and lines, as he does constantly, was entirely within his right. That, however, would not justify his repeating as his own the phrases and lines of other people. If, therefore, we insist that the translator and Chaucer were different persons, we are almost under the necessity of assuming that it was the writer whose name has not come down that coolly plundered the works and reproduced the style of the more famous poet. When we consider that the all-attempting Lydgate, in his translation of Boccaccio's 'Fall of Princes,' did not venture to versify the subjects that Chaucer had previously treated, for the avowed reason that it would be an exhibition of presumption on his part to come into competition with his great master, let us pay our tribute of respect to the

boldness, not to call it audacity, of the daring adventurer who had no hesitation in placing his version beside that of his universally admired contemporary, while at the same time he quietly appropriated from him phrases and lines for the sake of adorning his own work. Nor let us refuse the admiration which waits upon success, no matter how achieved. It is not often that literary history has to recount a story of the kind. To this nameless poet fell, on this theory, the rare fortune of having his translation taken as the one to displace that made by him who was pronounced by the verdict of his own and of succeeding centuries the foremost man of letters of his time.

There is still one additional point to be made before this long discussion can be brought to a conclusion. The denial of the genuineness of the existing translation of the *Roman de la Rose* involves the assumption of most untenable ground in regard to the conduct of the first editors of Chaucer's complete works. It is something quite distinct from any consideration of their literary capacity, or of their disposition to attribute to the poet the composition of productions in which he had no concern. During the sixteenth century, and especially at the time of the publication of the folio of 1532, in which the present version originally appeared, there must have been a manuscript of Chaucer's translation in existence. It is no unreasonable supposition that there were several of them. Both it and its original were then too famous works not to have received a good deal of attention from readers, and consequently from transcribers. As it remained so long unprinted,

it would be natural that manuscript copies of it should be religiously preserved by their owners until its appearance in book form. If this be conceded—and no one is likely to deny that it could hardly fail to have been the case—we are landed at once into the midst of a series of improbabilities. All of them, however, we are asked to accept as certainties. The first editor of Chaucer's complete works, according to his own statement, was moved and stirred to make diligent search for true copies of the poet's writings. In order to acquire possession of them he spent much time and labor and money. We are asked to believe that he should have succeeded in missing the genuine translation, and have taken in place of it another that was spurious. We are asked to believe that this spurious version was published and circulated in an age which read Chaucer constantly, and nevertheless met with no suspicion from any quarter as to its being a production of the poet. Caxton, as we know from his own words, printed his second edition of the 'Canterbury Tales,' because the poorness of the text of the first excited the indignation of a reader who was familiar with the work as contained in a more correct manuscript. But in this instance it was not an imperfect copy, but an entirely spurious version that was palmed off upon the public as Chaucer's own composition. Yet, when ten years later the edition came to be reprinted, there is no indication that there was the least remonstrance made by any one who was in possession of the genuine translation, or had become by any means aware of its existence.

It must be admitted that this is a proceeding difficult to explain, if it can be explained at all. The case is entirely different with the confessedly spurious pieces that were included in this first collected edition. One might then well have believed that Chaucer did not write them; but his belief would be no more than an expression of personal opinion. The reader or student of that day would be in no position to contradict the editor. Even were he so much a lover of the poet as to have in his possession manuscript copies of many of his works, that would not, of itself, authorize him to deny the genuineness of works of which he had no manuscript copies at all. Yet, even with the few facilities for critical study then existing, the spuriousness of some of the pieces printed in the early editions was detected, as we have seen, in the very century in which they appeared.[1] But this was something that did not happen in the case of the 'Romance of the Rose.' The person or persons who possessed Chaucer's own translation, which the present one has superseded, never took occasion to point out the blunder or the forgery; never uttered any protest against the reproduction of this spurious version and its perpetuation in the successive folio editions that appeared in the sixteenth century; never made any effort to bring it out as a separate publication in an age which was eager to issue, under the poet's name, works of every kind which, on any pretext, could be attributed to him as their author. The only assumption that can be framed in order to break the inference that must necessarily be drawn from the con-

[1] See vol. i., pages 435, 436, and 456–459.

duct of the early printers and editors and readers is, that Chaucer's translation must have perished by the end of the fifteenth century—in fact, within a comparatively short period after the introduction of printing into England—and that by the time the folio of 1532 was published, all knowledge of its character and contents had disappeared from the memory of men. This argument has so much of strength that the supposition upon which it is based does not involve an actual impossibility. But surely no one will pretend that there is any probability in its favor.

With this, the protracted examination of the genuineness of the 'Romance of the Rose' is concluded. Those who have had the patience to follow the discussion of the question from the beginning to the end will perhaps be willing to concede that no objections against Chaucer's authorship of the translation have been left unnoticed. They will recognize that one or two considerations that make against the claim that he produced the existing version have been advanced for the first time in the foregoing pages. I have at least endeavored to state the arguments on both sides fully and fairly. If any have been overlooked, or not accorded their full weight, the neglect or undervaluation has been the result of inadvertence or ignorance, and not of intention. It is for the truth, and not for the prevalence of any particular view, that the conscientious student is bound to labor. Still, it is always difficult to set forth to others with absolute impartiality the evidence for a side which one does not himself accept. This may have affected the presentation that has been given of the

reasoning of those who deny the genuineness of this translation. It is proper to advance a caution of this sort even when one is wholly unconscious that his utterances have been unduly influenced in the slightest degree by his own convictions. The convictions themselves have hardly been disguised. To my own mind, there is but one conclusion that can be drawn from the examination that has just been made. The weight of evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of Chaucer's authorship of the present version.

It need not be denied that serious objections exist to this view on the ground of ryme and metre. But they are capable of explanation upon the theory that the translation was the work of the poet. That he should have changed his methods of versification at different periods involves no undue strain upon our belief. That he should do so was in truth almost an inevitable result of his position towards the language and literature. In discussions like this, we are apt to lose sight of the fact that Chaucer was at once the founder and the perfecter of his own art. He had largely to create his own melody. This is something into which the modern poet is born. From his earliest years the latter has before him the finest models to guide imitation and to stimulate emulation. The road he sets out to traverse has been beaten smooth by generations of versifiers, who have made the practice of poetizing easy, however wofully they may have lacked its inspiration. No such work had been accomplished in the English tongue when Chaucer came upon the stage. No such models were then in existence. With very few exceptions, most of

the poems produced before his are as rugged in form as they are commonplace in sentiment. Gifted by nature he must have been with the finest of ears for poetical harmony. Without it he could have done nothing. But even with it, some time must have elapsed in his intellectual development before he could have attained to any reasonable mastery of his own speech, to the sway of a language not as yet tamed to the yoke of melodious versification, hardly even to that of clear expression. Contrasted with the men of later times who are sometimes able to write vigorous lines in their nonage, Chaucer stands at a marked disadvantage. It seems certain that he must have groped his way slowly to that perfection in the management and moulding of the speech which he attained at last so supremely. This fact, joined with the conflict of dialects and the changing character of the spoken tongue, would account satisfactorily for any and all variations exhibited from time to time in his own practice.

The opposite theory, on the other hand, involves difficulties of a far graver character. Those who refuse to concede the genuineness of the 'Romance of the Rose' cannot afford to rest their denial upon purely negative grounds. The many arguments in favor of its authenticity, hitherto quietly ignored, must first by them be overthrown. Some of them present problems of peculiar perplexity. The parallelisms of phrase and expression, in particular, cannot be explained save on the assumption that the boldest and most thorough-going plagiarism of its kind that can be found in literary history has been successfully perpetrated. It has been

perpetrated, too, by a poet of high ability upon a poet of the highest, or the reverse. This is something, assuredly, that needs to be cleared up before it is worth while to bestow much attention upon the minor morals of metrical and grammatical procedure. Yet it is fair to the reader to state, in conclusion, that the view of the genuineness of the existing version that has been just expressed is not the view generally entertained. The large majority of the men who are distinguished as Chaucer scholars do not regard this translation as the work of the poet. There may be arguments, as yet held in reserve, that are decisive of the question. With the evidence before him, so far as I have been able to gather it and to present it, the reader is in a position to form his own conclusion as to the validity of the opposing theories as the matter now stands.

V.

THE LEARNING OF CHAUCER

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I.

IF the report can be trusted, which biographers and essayists have united to make or confirm, Chaucer was one of the most learned men that have ever existed. Upon whatever other points they differ, upon this they all agree. According to their statements, very few, if any, subjects that were known in his time were unknown to him. Furthermore, he not only knew everything, but he also knew it well. Very little restraint has been placed upon the use of the laudatory adjectives that have been employed to denote the degree of his proficiency as well as the extent of his acquirements. Testimony to this effect began to be furnished early. The dedication to Henry VIII. of the first edition of his collected works declared that they showed "manifest comprobation of his excellent learning in all kinds of doctrines and sciences." We have already seen that Leland tells us that Chaucer left the university an acute logician, a delightful orator, an elegant poet, a profound philosopher, and an able mathematician. Not satisfied with this, he added the further statement that he was a devout theologian. These assertions were repeated by both Bale and Pits. The latter seems, however, to have had some scruples about certifying to Chaucer's

knowledge of divinity. He speaks of him somewhat guardedly as a theologian not to be despised.[1] To attain eminence in any one of these departments of study is of itself sufficient to confer immortality upon most men. According to his earliest biographers, Chaucer attained eminence in them all.

This view has never met with any expressed opposition. The first assertions of this kind were received without question by the writers who followed. These, to be sure, rarely mentioned the special subjects in which Chaucer excelled. They contented themselves with general statements descriptive of his vast acquirements. The epithet 'learned' came in particular to be attached to his name almost as inevitably as that of 'moral' to Gower. Some, doubtless, there were who questioned his right to the title. From the address to the reader, prefixed to Speght's second edition, it seems that certain persons were then to be found who did not recognize the appropriateness of the epithet. Still, one gets the impression from the words in which the fact is conveyed that this derogatory estimate of the poet's attainments was really due rather to his lack of stupidity than to his lack of knowledge. He was not dull enough, he was not heavy enough, to gain that respect which the common mind is perhaps pardonably disposed to associate with the possession of great learning. To silence these objectors, Speght expressed the hope that some scholar, with the requisite skill and leisure, would compare Chaucer with the authors both in Greek and

[1] "Theologus * * * non contemnendus."—Pitseus, *De Illustribus Angliæ Scriptoribus*, p. 572.

Latin from whom he had drawn excellent things. He was satisfied that the result of any such examination would show that the poet, besides his knowledge of several tongues, was also a man of wide reading. It is evident that the proof of his greatness was not to depend so much upon what he himself had said as upon his familiarity with what others had said. There was certainly no disposition on Speght's part to have the fact of his author's erudition escape due notice. On the principal title-page Chaucer was styled "our ancient and learned English poet." The biography contained in the volume is headed "The Life of our Learned English Poet." The life itself begins with the words "this famous and learned poet."

This repute for wide and profound erudition seems, in truth, to have been an unacknowledged reason for taking the view that Chaucer was educated at both Cambridge and Oxford. It was secretly felt that it must have required two universities to furnish him with the quantity of varied learning which he was credited with possessing. Nor outside of the existence of dissent, which Speght suggests rather than records, does there ever appear to have been any thought of denying the immensity of his intellectual acquisitions. The fact was willingly conceded by men who were themselves distinguished for scholarship. Selden, in his address to the reader, prefixed to Drayton's 'Polyolbion,' brings forward an illustration of the poet's knowledge, "transcending," as he expresses it, "the common road." By Milton, in one of his controversial pamphlets, he was styled "our learned Chaucer." Henry Wharton called him *vir extra con-*

troversiam doctissimus;[1] and, a theologian himself, he represented the poet as especially skilled in matters of theology. But we need not take the pains to cite the authorities of the past who have furnished the same or similar testimony. That testimony has been constantly repeated, without contradiction, down to our own time. At no period, in fact, has the extent of Chaucer's learning been insisted upon more strongly than during the present century. In numberless essays, in almost every sketch of his life, his achievements as a scholar have been put forward prominently. He has again and again been represented as versed in classical literature, in French and Italian literature, in the sciences so far as they were known in his day, in theological studies, and, what had come to mean almost the same thing, in polemic divinity. Any partial dissent from this view that has occasionally been expressed has only spurred the objector to give greater praise to what he conceded. Sir Harris Nicolas, for example, in his life of Chaucer denied the poet all knowledge of Italian. He classed those who attributed to him this acquirement among "those indiscriminate worshippers of genius who endow their idols with all human attainments." Yet it would hardly be amiss to reckon him among these same worshippers. He was particular to ascribe to him an acquaintance with the classics, with divinity, with astronomy, with so much as was then known of chemistry, and, in fact, with every other branch of the scholastic learning of the age.

[1] Quoted in Todd's *Illustrations of the Lives and Writings of Gower and Chaucer*, Introduction, p. xxxvi., note.

There is nothing peculiar, however, in this position. It may be taken as the view commonly, if not universally, received. To gainsay so general a consensus of opinion may therefore seem to warrant the inference that it is singularity rather than truth at which the disputant is aiming. Yet a careful consideration of the writings of Chaucer seems to me to lead irresistibly to the conclusion that the extent of his attainments has always been enormously overrated. No one claims for him that he was a scholar in the higher sense of the word—meaning by that a man who has not merely accumulated an immense quantity of accurate knowledge, but possesses and exercises the power of giving organic unity to its scattered facts. This could not have been his distinction, for it was not the business of his life. To such an eminence perhaps no one in that age could have attained; most certainly not he. Chaucer could not have been a scholar in the high sense of the word if he would; in spite of his fondness for books, to which he bears ample testimony, there is more than doubt that he would have been such a one if he could. It is not this, however, which the advocates of his learning have in mind. They assert his claim only to the title of scholar in the lower sense of the word—that is, a man who has simply gained possession of great stores of accurate learning, much beyond the ordinary amount possessed by the men of his time who were similarly situated. His pretensions in this particular, or rather the pretensions of others for him, will hardly be borne out by strict investigation. It is hard to see, in truth, in what respect he has a much better right to

the name than Shakspeare, whose learning has never been deemed his proudest distinction. Yet the impression is constantly given that he stood to the men of his age in about the same relation as Ben Jonson, for instance, did to the writers of the age of Elizabeth.

To all this there is obviously another side. Let us, then, first make clear what we do not mean by denying to Chaucer the title of learned as well as what we do mean. There are certain general considerations which we are bound to have clearly before our eyes in deciding upon the extent of any one's acquirements, no matter when he lived. Learning, in the first place, is an ambiguous word. In the mouth of one man it has an altogether different signification from what it has in the mouth of another. In any period there are degrees of acquirement which are confounded by the multitude, though they never fail to be sharply discriminated by the few. If this were a distinction fully recognized and adequately insisted upon in considering the question of the poet's knowledge, there would be no reason for further discussion. His relative position could be conceded without maintaining that it was an absolute one. In that case it would be just to say of him that in one sense of the word he was, for his time, a learned man. In an age when the mere disposition to read what somebody else wrote might subject a gentleman to the charge of pedantry, the ability to write works of one's own would fairly entitle him so doing to the name of a great scholar. Such he would doubtless seem to the more or less ignorant people who were his contemporaries, to whom then, as now, any sort of acquisition

would appear to be erudition. By them his attainments, whether great or small, would be largely magnified. For it is with knowledge as with money. He who has more than most is usually credited with possessing at least twice as much as he really has. Reputation of this sort, however, is not apt to extend beyond the grave. The peculiarity in the case of Chaucer is that the fame of his knowledge has increased since his death, instead of diminishing. We can concede that he was a learned man according to the lay standard. We are constantly asked to accept him as a learned man according to the standard of the scholar.

But there is more than the difference of individual judgment to be considered. We are to look at the attainments of any person not with our own eyes, but with the eyes that the age lends us to which he belongs. For learning is not only an ambiguous, it is also a comparative term. A certain kind of it, the possession at one period of a select few, becomes in succeeding periods the property of all. Hence it would be grossly unfair to test the scholarship of a man who flourished in one century by the fuller knowledge that has come to prevail in the centuries that follow. Equally unfair would it be to hold him responsible for his acceptance of beliefs which, though generally received in his own day, time has shown to be erroneous. In any given age there is a good deal of learning that is not knowledge. To the age that follows it seems something more than incomplete information; it is absolute foolishness. Still, every period is entitled to be judged by its own standards. We have no right to disparage the man

belonging to it because he is not in advance of his contemporaries, because he has failed to depreciate what they admired, or to reject what they accepted. Nevertheless, there is a reverse process just as unfair, the consideration of which is usually forgotten or ignored. We cannot afford to apply loosely to him who flourished in a time long past the title of learned in the sense in which it is understood at present. It may be absolutely appropriate. In many cases, however, it would convey a distinctly wrong impression. For not only does knowledge itself vary from age to age, but also the severity of the standard of scholarship. As the means of amassing information and of verifying the truth of statements become more numerous, more exacting tests are applied to those who are supposed to stand out from their fellows by the extent of their acquirements. Here, again, there would be no difficulty in this particular discussion if this plain fact had been kept in view. But the tendency has been in Chaucer's case to apply the words and ideas of a later day to a condition of things that in the earlier day had no existence. The claim is made, perhaps unconsciously, that he was a man of learning as men in modern times judge of it. In that case he should be tested by modern standards. Tested by these standards, he most certainly fails.

One further general statement needs to be made before we enter upon the special subject that awaits investigation. There is, at any given time, a certain sort of knowledge in vogue which enables its possessor to take rank as an educated man, or, in the more exclusive

phrase, as a liberally educated man. This fact does not imply that the knowledge indicated by it is in itself something desirable. On the contrary, it is not unfrequently of the sort that is not worth knowing. Its value is often purely artificial. Accordingly, like the paper money of one period, it is wholly uncurrent in the periods that succeed. Still, however valuable or valueless it may be, it enables him who has it to look down on all those not enriched by it, or encumbered with it, as distinctly unlearned by comparison. The more he has of it, the greater will be his relative rank as a scholar. As a consequence, the conventional respect in which it is held frequently forces men to sacrifice to its acquisition the attainment of knowledge of far more real worth. To neglect it, to despise it, may be evidence of one's insight, of one's intellectual greatness, even of one's genius, but it is not evidence of one's learning. The next age may honor the man who has disregarded it because he has disregarded it. It may look upon those who continued blindly to accumulate it as having wasted their lives. But its verdict on this point is not one to be considered in a discussion of this character. By his familiarity, or lack of familiarity, with the knowledge held in estimation in his own century must the learning of any man be tested by his contemporaries. By the degree of his familiarity with the knowledge that is accessible must the degree of his learning be decided. After-times, in passing upon his acquirements, are in justice bound to accept the same standard.

With this preliminary survey of the general considerations that bear upon the subject, we pass on to the

special case of Chaucer. Two points there are which come at once into prominence in any investigation of this kind that is made. The first is the accuracy of the poet's learning. The second is the extent of it. In regard to both, the differences between our own time and his must be taken fully into account. There were great disadvantages under which he labored; but there were also counterbalancing advantages. In the fourteenth century books were few. The agencies for ascertaining facts were scanty. Those for verifying them could hardly be said to exist at all. This was a state of affairs which stood directly in the way of the attainment, at least of the easy attainment, of accurate knowledge. It is in the sharpest possible contrast with the existing condition of things, when the means of correcting misapprehension and of obviating error are to be found at almost every one's elbow. The ancient author was sometimes wrong because he had no means of finding out what was right. When the modern author is wrong, it is usually because he has not availed himself of his means. On the other hand, accuracy within certain limits is always attainable. Perfect familiarity with some one subject, or even with a small number of subjects, is pretty surely within the reach of him who is willing to put forth the requisite exertions. To the man who is by nature a scholar, there will be no rest until that familiarity is secured. He will reckon the acquisition of it far above matters which to the majority of men will seem of vastly more importance. And while the student of the fourteenth century was sadly hampered by the rarity of books, and in particular by

the non-existence of books of reference, he was in certain respects in a position of advantage as compared with a student of the nineteenth. If not much was granted, not much was required. Numerous as were the hindrances in the way of doing what he sought to do, there was a certain compensation in the fact that there was comparatively little to be done in order to attain justly the reputation of learning. He belonged to an age in which so few things, comparatively speaking, were to be known that a great scholar was expected to know not merely something of everything, but everything of everything. Men at that time thought nothing of making a specialty of omniscience. To more than one of them was given the title of Universal Doctor, because they were supposed to have attained this desirable consummation of a life of studious toil. No one needs to be told how far different it is now. For most of us, devotion to a single, and usually a rather narrow, specialty is the only course that can be followed with the certainty of securing any self-satisfaction, or with the hope of gaining the commendation of others. With so many heavy winds of knowledge blowing from every quarter, it requires a vessel of enormous burden to stand the strain of carrying much intellectual sail. The difficulties in the way of becoming a great scholar are just as formidable now as in the days of Chaucer. The position has been shifted; but the toil of reaching it remains the same.

In the consideration of this question, it is the matter of accuracy that is first to be considered. This is some-

thing that lies now, and has ever lain, at the foundation of all genuine reputation for learning. It is always possible to attain it, and always difficult. Most of us know from experience how easy a thing it is to miss. Does Chaucer display that anxiety to secure it which is one special characteristic of the scholar? Moreover, does he actually secure it? The answer to both these questions must be in the negative. He apparently gave himself no trouble about it; he certainly is far from having attained to it in many instances. We are undoubtedly bound to be on our guard against doing him injustice. The blunders that are found in his writings are sometimes due to the scribe and not to the poet. Comparison of texts enables us in several cases to save the author's reputation at the expense of the copyist's. In the 'House of Fame,' for instance, Calliope is mentioned in the early printed editions as having but seven sister muses. In the two manuscripts that survive she is furnished with her legitimate number of eight. On the other hand, in the 'Death of Blanche the Duchess' the manuscripts represent Macrobius as writing "all the vision of Scipio," the very thing he did not do. In the early printed editions, however, Macrobius is represented as writing "of — that is, 'concerning' — the vision of Scipio," which is a perfectly just description of the commentary to which the famous episode in the treatise on the 'Republic' serves as a text. There are numerous instances, also, in which proper names have been mangled by the copyists beyond recognition. Still, the fact that where several manuscripts exist these names are, in most cases, pretty sure to appear in some of them in a correct

form enables us to feel confidence that they were correctly written in the first place.

Errors from this quarter were inevitable. Whenever there is conflict of authority, it is accordingly due to Chaucer that the doubt should always be decided in his favor. But after all allowances are made, there still remain inaccuracies of detail which, if committed by a modern author, would be held up by hostile critics as convincing evidence that he had failed to master the rudiments of knowledge. Nor would the judicious friend in such a case be inclined to make the matter of learning too prominent in the tribute of admiration he pays. Fairness to Chaucer may, indeed, require us to strike from his list of inaccuracies those that were peculiar to his time and not especially to him, even though it might have been possible for him to have ascertained the actual facts. He calls, for illustration, Scipio a king; but so did the writers whom he read and from whom he borrowed. He shares with perhaps all the poets of the Middle Ages in the error that made Venus receive her name from the mount of Cithæron, and not from the island of Cythera, with the consequence that the former place is invariably made sacred to her and not to Zeus.[1] It would be no more just to hold him responsible for this confusion than to hold a modern poet responsible for the haziness of mind or indifference to fact that was never

[1] "Citheron Beotiæ mons est poetarum carminibus celeberrimus, nec longe Athenis extollit. Aliqui partem Parnasi putant a Citherone quodam denominatum, in hoc enim præcipue colebatur Bacchus, secundum autem alios Venus, eamque dicunt ab eo Citheream fuisse vocatam." — Boccaccio, *Liber de Montibus, Sylvis, Fontibus, Lacubus*, etc.

able to decide whether Helicon was a fountain or a mountain, the result of which has been that literature has usually gained the victory over truth. Particulars of the sort indicated may not strike the reader as of any importance in themselves. We are to remember, however, that they were then relatively of much more importance than now. It was mainly in the knowledge of them that no small part of the learning of Chaucer's time consisted; and that by the accuracy of his knowledge of them is the completeness of his own scholarship to be decided. The ones already mentioned may be thrown out of consideration, not because what he says about them is true, but because it was generally believed to be true. This is not bestowing upon him the highest praise, nor is it holding him up to a very high standard. It is simply supplying him with the defence, which insists that a man shall not be held responsible for his ignorance of what was generally unknown in his age. This is ample justification for the man of letters; it is not an altogether satisfactory one for the scholar.

But there are passages in Chaucer's writings to which none even of these apologetic explanations can apply. The facts contained in them could only owe their origin to misapprehension on the poet's part of what he had heard, or misunderstanding of what he had read. In 'Troilus and Cressida' Styx is described as the pit and not the river of hell.[1] In 'Anelida and Arcite' Thebes and Greece are spoken of as two different countries and as fighting with each other.[2] A similar impres-

[1] iv., 1540.

[2] Line 53.

sion is conveyed by the Knight's tale.[1] In the 'House of Fame' there is a plain reference to the burning of the temple of Diana at Ephesus; but in the passage containing it the temple of Diana appears as the temple of Isis.[2] Apology of a certain sort could be made for this on the ground that Isis was a moon-goddess as well as Diana, and that in consequence the names could be used interchangeably, without any disparagement to the accuracy of the poet's knowledge. But unfortunately he puts the burned temple of Isis at Athens, instead of Ephesus. This poem furnishes two other somewhat striking illustrations of his failure to read his originals aright. He tells us in it of Marsyas, the flute-player of Phrygia, who was flayed alive by Apollo for his presumption in challenging the god to a musical contest. But Marsyas appears in every ancient copy of the 'House of Fame,' whether in print or manuscript, as Marcia, a woman. As a woman she is represented throughout the passage. There can hardly be any question that the blunder was Chaucer's own. The origin of it is not difficult to trace, when once we have got over the impression that the poet was a great scholar. The story was taken from the 'Metamorphoses' of Ovid. In that work the name of the contestant of the god is found in the form Marsya. Chaucer looked upon the proper name as a regular feminine noun of the first declension, instead of being a Greek masculine inflected according to that declension. Of the forms of the latter he may never have heard; a point which we could afford to pass over without comment, unless we are determined to

[1] See in particular lines 2109 to 2116.

[2] Lines 1843–1845.

insist upon the height and depth and breadth of his scholarship.

But whatever excuse may be made for this mistake, it is hard to devise any for these that follow. The first concerns the son of Æneas. He is expanded into two persons. In the flight from Troy, we find Creusa mentioned in the 'House of Fame,'

"And her younge son, Iulo,
And eke Ascanius also."[1]

To save the poet's reputation, the second line has been rendered "called also Ascanius." This is, indeed, what Virgil says, but what Chaucer does not say. There is more justification for the reverse process of rolling into one the two goddesses Bellona and Pallas. This takes place in 'Anelida and Arcite.' But in so doing Chaucer was following his authorities, which gave Bellona as one of the designations of Minerva.[2] These particular errors in legendary and mythological story have their counterpart in historical narrative. In the Monk's tale the two conspirators against Cæsar, Brutus and Cassius, are apparently turned into one person.[3] It is fair to say that an interpretation can be given to the line which would make them distinct. Still, the statements made by this worthy ecclesiastic are sufficiently full of mistakes to justify the description given of him in the general Prologue, that he preferred hunting to poring over books. For illustration, in recounting the deeds of Hercules he confounded the story of Busirus, King of Egypt, the

[1] Lines 177, 178.
[2] Boccaccio, *De Genealogia Deorum*, p. 145, ed. of 1531.
[3] Line 707.

slayer of his guests, with Diomedes, King of Thrace, who fed his horses with human flesh. He also represents Zenobia, the Queen of Palmyra, as having sprung from the royal blood of Persia, and that the history of her life had been told by Persian historians.

Chaucer's treatment of Cleopatra in the 'Legend of Good Women' might not, perhaps, deserve mention here, were it not that he took the pains to inform us expressly that the story was historical. The selection of her at all is, to say the least, singular for a scholar. While much can be conceded to the exigencies of fiction, it is of a nature to startle the reader to find an addition to the lives of the saints made by representing Cleopatra as a martyr for love. The Queen of Egypt presents peculiar difficulties to him who attempts to make her course of conduct serve as a lesson to faithless man of the beauty of feminine devotion. Even in the story as told by Chaucer, Antony is not only the more in earnest of the two, he is much more of a martyr. The choice of Cleopatra to appear as the first representative of noble women who have died for love might almost be regarded as a characteristic jest upon the poet's part, had he displayed any genuine familiarity with the details of the great historic occurrences which it came in his way to relate. But all his knowledge about them is hazy where it is not inaccurate. Antony slays himself after his defeat in the sea-fight at Actium as soon as he sees that the Egyptian queen has fled. For his sake it is that Cleopatra digs a pit, fills it full of serpents, casts herself therein, and is stung to death. These are variations of the story which Chaucer either

found somewhere, or they must have arisen from vague recollections of what he had read. It may be that the latter view is correct. It may be that in these details he has followed in a blind way the blind epitome of Roman history written by Florus.[1] On the other hand, he may have derived the incidents, as he relates them, from some source now unknown, or at least not pointed out. Still, in either view it can never justify a claim to exact scholarship that a writer has borrowed inexact information from authors that were inexact.

It may have been pure jocoseness on Chaucer's part to put into the mouth of the Wife of Bath moral maxims which she asserts came from the 'Almagest' of Ptolemy. But this is not likely. It is not a kind of wit that would find much appreciation in an age of general ignorance. It is far more reasonable to suppose it to have sprung from confused recollection. "I suspect," says Tyrwhitt, dryly, "that the Wife of Bath's copy of Ptolemy was very different from any I have been able to meet with." An error of a precisely similar kind is to be found in the account of Zenobia in the Monk's tale. Those who are seeking for further light upon her career are referred by the poet to "my master Petrarch, that writ enough of this, I undertake." The fact is that Petrarch wrote nothing about her at all, while his contemporary Boccaccio did. The latter, therefore, is the one to whom the reference is really due. So, again, in a quotation from the Gospels in the prologue to the Wife of Bath's tale, Mark is represented as telling us how

[1] See Bech in *Anglia*, vol. v., p. 314–318.

Christ refreshed men with barley bread. The one who records the character of the bread is John.

This last reference brings to mind the fact that there was one work of which no scholar could well be ignorant. Not only must much of the information contained in it have been repeated again and again in church services, but the work itself must have always been accessible in its entirety in the monastic libraries. This was the Vulgate version of the Bible. There are numerous references to it and quotations from it in Chaucer's writings. Some of them were certainly taken at second-hand. Still, there are enough indisputably his own to show his familiarity with the book. Yet it was not always a perfect familiarity. It is, perhaps, unjust at any time to hold a poet strictly to facts, and most assuredly unjust when he has a higher purpose of his own to serve by diverging from them. A certain respect is due them, however, when nothing is gained by treating them with indifference. It is a somewhat strained interpretation of Scripture to represent Samson as dying for the love of Delilah, as Chaucer does in the 'Death of Blanche,' because she had betrayed him to his enemies.[1] The existence, however, of other and better examples does not render it necessary to scan this one very closely. In the Monk's tale the three companions of Daniel, well known to us all as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, are reduced to two, and Daniel himself makes up the third.[2] At the end of the story of Lucretia in the 'Legend of Good Women' the Saviour is reported as having said that nowhere in all Israel had he found so much faith as

[1] Lines 738 and 739.

[2] Line 176.

in a woman. The person of whom our Lord uttered the remark was not a woman, but the Roman centurion at Capernaum.[1] Lamech also, as the first recorded man who ventured to marry two wives, seems to have made a deep impression upon the mind of the poet. He speaks of him on several occasions. Yet in 'Anelida and Arcite' he represents him not only as the inventor of bigamy, but likewise of tents.[2] For the latter statement he even adds the phrase "but-if[3] men lie." Still it was not Lamech, but Lamech's son, who is described in the Scriptures as having been "the father of such as dwell in tents." Not one of these mistakes is of any importance in itself. They can only be regarded as of importance so far as they may be held to indicate the habit of mind, which in these cases is certainly not that of a scholar. Far more singular, in truth, are the references to Joab. Nothing can seem much stranger to a student of Jewish history than to have the fierce warrior who led the hosts of David described as a trumpeter by profession,[4] apparently because he is thrice represented in the Bible as sounding a trumpet as a signal for his army to assemble.[5]

This list of errors could be enlarged by some other instances. Enough have been specified to settle the question. Doubtless some of these examples are mistakes arising from oversight, or from that momentary forgetfulness from which the most careful of men can never be

[1] This illustration I take from Bech's article in *Anglia*, vol. v., p. 336. Bech corrects Chaucer's error, he tells us, "im interesse unseres geschlechtes."

[2] Lines 150–154.

[3] Unless.

[4] *House of Fame*, line 1245.

[5] 2 Samuel, ii., 28; xviii., 16; xx., 22.

wholly free. Of the most important of them, however, no such disposition can be fairly made. We can therefore feel justified in rejecting decisively the claim that Chaucer possessed any of that accuracy of information which in modern times is looked upon as one essential, if not the most essential, characteristic of the man of learning. It does not help the matter to say that similar errors were committed by his contemporaries. Chaucer is not proved to be a scholar by showing that other men were not scholars. That they blundered as often as he is probably true of most of them. In fact, alongside of some of them he is in this as in most respects apt to show to advantage. The ignorance of Gower, in particular, is forced upon the attention by the anxiety he exhibits to display his learning. This industrious accumulator of useless and incorrect information seems to have taken peculiar pride in the amount of literary lumber he had been able to heap together. He lugs in everything he has ever heard of or read, and often gives undesignedly the impression that he has thoroughly mastered all the then existing knowledge that was not worth knowing. It is not till the reader comes to examine his words closely that he finds how utterly baseless is the belief that fancies him learned in any sense we now attach to that word. Gower was versed, or supposed himself versed, in the stories, whether legendary or historical, of the ancient peoples and their heroes. But the confused notions he entertained of what he had read, the mixture of ridiculous fable and more ridiculous fact in what he reproduced, make his pages an arsenal of blunders, from which weapons of every sort of absurd state-

ment or utter misconception can be drawn at will. He sets down Numa Pompilius as the first law-giver of the Trojans, as Romulus was of the Romans. He speaks of Lycurgus as a prince of Athens and as law-giver to the people of that city. He describes Tantalus as a flood of hell in which he who plunges is likened to the avaricious man. He turns the city of Paphos into an island, and performs the same operation upon the promontory of Pallene. He represents Virgil, though in his character of magician, as having flourished before the second Punic War. Furthermore, Crassus appears as the Emperor of Rome, and has molten gold poured down his throat by his subjects. There are blunders greater than these, but they would require too much space for their exposure.

Nor is Gower singular in this respect. Errors just as bad as any made by him or by Chaucer can be found in writers who followed, and that, too, where we should expect that the matter would be one with which they would be especially familiar. Lydgate, for instance, was a monk, and might naturally be supposed acquainted with the history contained in the Bible. Yet he represents the Egyptians as having suffered from twelve plagues instead of ten. The introduction of printing increased the number of books and rendered them far more accessible; but at first it certainly did not increase the habit of accuracy. One or two examples are all that can be given, though many exist. In Gawin Douglas's 'Palace of Honour,' Thespis, the celebrated father of the Grecian stage, makes his appearance as the mother of the nine muses. Spenser, again, is a poet to whom for

a long time the epithet of 'learned' was often applied. Yet there is scarcely any author who more persistently manufactures persons and places that never had any existence, under the impression that he was describing something actual. He confuses mythological stories and blunders about historic facts. In the 'Fairy Queen,' for illustration, he makes Socrates, while draining the hemlock, pour out at the same time life and philosophy "to the fair Critias, his dearest belamy"—this fair Critias being one of the Thirty Tyrants and an enemy to the philosopher, instead of his dearest friend.[1]

Though there are worse characteristics in the world than knowing things accurately, I am not disposed to deny that there are also better, and that in the equipment of a poet exactness of information is not a quality of the first importance. The beauty of one of the greatest sonnets of our literature is not dimmed because in it Keats represents Cortez and not Balboa as the discoverer of the Pacific. The mistakes which have been pointed out as committed by Chaucer would deserve nothing more than the barest reference, were not the claim so constantly made in his behalf that he was a man of learning as well as a man of genius. The accuracy of his knowledge can hardly be conceded. What now is the truth in regard to the extent of it? This is a matter far more interesting to consider than the other. But it is also far more difficult to settle satisfactorily. The decision depends not only on the study of the poet, but likewise on the study of the authors whom the poet himself declares that he read, or of those whom he may

[1] Book ii., canto vii., 52.

have read without any declaration to that effect. To pronounce positively upon the point seems, therefore, to involve, and perhaps does involve, a species of presumption on the part of the investigator. It requires in his case thorough knowledge to have the ability, or thorough lack of knowledge to have the hardihood, to make many positive or negative assertions in regard to the matter. He certainly stands in perpetual danger of mistaking his own ignorance for Chaucer's. No direct light is shed upon the subject beyond what the writings of the latter furnish. To trace from them the books and authors he has read is a delicate and difficult operation. It is, perhaps, out of the power of any one man to achieve. It is with no expectation of accomplishing the task thoroughly that I set out to cover a portion of the ground. If it does nothing more, however, it will furnish a base of operations from which others can push the investigation further, can fill in what has here been imperfectly outlined, can correct what has been misapprehended, and can supply from fuller information what will almost inevitably be lacking in a preliminary survey of the subject.

At the outset it is to be said that the investigator is liable to two opposite errors. He is equally in danger of denying Chaucer credit where it is due, and of giving him credit where it is not due. It clearly does not follow that the poet has read an author because he mentions him or even quotes him, any more than it follows that he has visited personally a place the name of which occurs in his writings. We are almost sure, as a matter of fact, that of the original of the Greek authors to whom

he not unfrequently refers—Aristotle, Homer, and Plato—he could not have made out a sentence. That was probably in the power of extremely few men in Western Europe in the fourteenth century; but of Chaucer's specific inability he tells us himself by implication. In the general Prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales' he is careful to introduce a saying of Plato[1] with the qualifying phrase "whoso that can him read;" and the particular sentiment there quoted reached him, we know, by the way of the 'Romance of the Rose' or of Boethius. Obviously, however, this argument may be reversed. As it does not follow that a writer has read the works of men whose names he mentions, so it is equally far from following that he has not read the writings of those whose names he does not mention. An author is under no greater necessity or liability to put on record every production with which he is familiar than he is to describe every place he has seen. Chaucer, therefore, may have been well acquainted with many works about which he has not uttered a word.

This is a possibility that must always be kept in view, though, for the purposes of this discussion, we can do no more than follow the rule which compels us to treat things not appearing as things not existing. The probabilities indicated by the latter of the two contingencies noted are likely to strike the men of our day as being of far more weight than those which are suggested by the former. To them the danger from this quarter that threatens the correctness of the conclusions reached by the investigator will seem altogether more serious than

[1] Line 741.

the mere chance that the poet had introduced the name of an author whom he knew about but did not know. For with us, in any given case, the proportion of works read and mentioned is, in most instances, immensely below the number of those read but not mentioned. Yet, while we are bound to accord to this view of the subject a certain significance, and to feel confident accordingly that Chaucer was acquainted with authors to whom he does not make even an allusion, it would nevertheless be the grossest of errors to give it anything like the consideration to which it would be entitled in our own age. The reasoning is, in fact, specious rather than strong. The weight we attach to it is due wholly to our disposition to judge former times by the feelings and ideas now prevalent. Instead of the probabilities being in its favor, they are all the other way. The position of the writer of the present time is almost exactly opposite to that of the past. The modern author is apt almost ostentatiously to avoid the ostentation of learning. The parade of it can be made so cheaply that even the necessary exhibition of it tends to beget the suspicion that it is merely a parade. The result is that the possessor of it usually takes pains to hide anything that may look like its display.

This was a course of conduct that never even occurred to the men of early times to think of adopting. The average of wit and wisdom was doubtless fully equal then to what it is now. The commodity that was rare was learning. There was consequently every reason for a writer to name the authors whom he read. Familiarity with them added to his own literary repute, just as famil-

iarity with persons high in position would add to his social repute. Few could know them. In an age of general ignorance, therefore, the fact that one knew them was itself a distinction which no one felt inclined to keep to himself. Moreover, it lent weight to every view he expressed, and strength to every position he took, if he could find support for either in the words of others, especially in the words of those whom all men held in honor. Hence arose the practice of citing authorities, as they were called. There was nothing more common in the literature of the Middle Ages. The more names and texts a writer could bring into his own discourse, the more convincing was the evidence of his own learning. Consequently many of the works then produced abound in quotations from different authors who are called successively into play to fortify positions which need no defence. Chaucer was certainly not exempt from this weakness, if it be a weakness. He sometimes mentions the names of writers with apparently little other purpose than to show that he has read them. In this he did no more than follow the fashion. As he followed it in many instances, where we are in a position to judge, it is not unfair to assume that he followed it in most, even though it is not in our power to prove the fact. It is therefore a natural conclusion in the case of an author not mentioned by him, or not mentioned by him often, that he had not been much read.

Chaucer's fondness for books we do not have to infer. It is a matter in regard to which we have the most explicit testimony from his own lips. He is eager to ac-

knowledge his obligations to them. He pays, in several places, the highest tribute to the benefit to be derived from their study. We have been so surfeited with them in modern times that we can hardly appreciate the hunger of the mind that must have been constantly experienced in days when a book was a book, no matter what was the character of its contents, no matter how the subject was treated about which it was written. Abundance had not cheapened their estimation, nor too much familiarity destroyed their interest. The poorest of them received attention, the greatest met with loving regard and sometimes with almost superstitious veneration. The possession of them was something of which to be proud. Their accumulation upon a large scale it was not even in the power of enormous riches to make. For that purpose they did not exist in sufficient numbers. There was doubtless the same variation in prices then as now, but the prices could never have been low. Often they must have been what we should consider extravagantly high. The issue rolls of the exchequer for 1380 show, for instance, that twenty-eight pounds were paid by the king for three books — a Bible written in the Gaelic language, and two volumes in two leathern cases, one containing the 'Romance of the Rose,' and the other the romances of 'Percival' and 'Gawain.'[1] The cost of these three, therefore, according to a frequent estimate of the comparative value of money, would be equivalent to about fourteen hundred dollars of our currency.

Undoubtedly, in the consideration of the price paid

[1] Devon's *Issues of the Exchequer*, p. 218.

on this occasion, the scarcity of kings as purchasers is to be considered, as well as the scarcity of the things to be purchased. Still, there can be no question that books, if they could be got at all, were held at high rates. They would be not merely out of the reach of a poet, as might be expected, but out of the reach of a controller of the port of London. Chaucer, in spite of his fondness for them, could not have been the owner of many. It was inevitable that in such an age the works a man possessed and studied should be to only a limited degree an index of his tastes. The reading of a student was determined largely not by the books he would like to have, but by those he would be able to get. In these days of well-stocked libraries, public or private, it is hard for us to realize the extreme shifts to which a man of a literary or scholastic bent of mind must often have been reduced in Chaucer's time in order to secure the perusal of some particular piece. Each person would have a special experience of his own, based upon his opportunities, not upon his desires. From each would be shut out whole provinces of literature now common to all. It is not merely that he would not know it; he would not even know of it.

Chaucer represents the studious Clerk of Oxford as preferring to have by the side of his bed twenty books of Aristotle and his philosophy than to be in possession of rich robes or instruments of music. For himself personally the subject mentioned might not have had the same fascination that it did for the religious scholar he described. But we can be pretty confident that the desire on his part was of the same general nature. The

temptation would be constantly before his mind to spend most of his limited leisure in the perusal of books and much of his limited means in their acquisition. Of his devotion to study he has given us frequent glimpses. At the beginning of the 'Death of Blanche' he represents himself as unable to sleep. He turns, in consequence, to reading as something far preferable to spending the night in playing at chess or draughts. In the 'Parliament of Fowls' he expressly tells us that both for pleasure and for instruction he read books often, and the one work upon which he was engaged at the time so interested him that it was the coming on of night alone that broke off its perusal. But there are two places in particular in his writings so important for the testimony they bear to his habits and tastes that, often as they have been quoted, they need to be repeated here. The first passage occurs in the 'House of Fame.' In the conversation which the poet represents himself as having with the eagle, he lets us into the knowledge of many of his personal practices and traits. He spends, in particular, his nights in composing poems in favor of love, and gives himself the headache in consequence. Yet he is so absorbed in his studies that he never learns how the servants of love are faring, and, as the eagle adds,

"Ne of nought ellès[1] that God made."

Not only does he fail to hear tidings of what is going on in far countries, but even the gossip of those who dwell almost at his very doors never comes to his ears. The records of scholastic life contain no more graphic picture

[1] Else.

than that in which Chaucer has painted in his own person the characteristics of the student for whom no world exists outside of the world of books. It is in these following lines, some of which have been already quoted,[1] that he describes his course of conduct after he has finished what have presumably been the official duties of the day:

"For when thy labor all done is,
And hast made all thy reckonings,
Instead of rest and newè things,
Thou goest home to thy house anon;
And also[2] dumb as any stone,
Thou sittest at another book,
Till fully dazèd is thy look,
And livest thus as an hermít,
Although thine abstinence is lyt."[3]

The other passage, which is full as well known, is in the prologue to the 'Legend of Good Women.' It is interesting from the view it gives not only of Chaucer's love of books, but of his love of nature. Between the two his mind was constantly oscillating. From the former mere amusement could scarcely drag him. It is only the sights and sounds of spring that overcome their fascination. After saying that we ought to honor and believe books, because in them alone is handed down the knowledge of the past, he goes on to speak of his own personal feelings about them in the following lines:

"As for me, though that I can[4] but lyt,[3]
On bookès for to read I me delight,
And to hem[5] give I faith and full credénce,
And in mine heart have hem[5] in reverénce

[1] Vol. i., p. 215. [2] As. [3] Little. [4] Know. [5] Them.

So heartily, that there is gamè[1] none
That from my bookès maketh me to gon,
But[2] it be seldom on the holiday;
Save certainly when that the month of May
Is comen, and that I hear the fowlès sing,
And that the flowers ginnen for to spring,
Farewell my book and my devotiòn!"

It is noticeable that in the first version of the prologue the last line reads,

"Farewell, my study, as lasting that season!"

This, if taken literally, would imply that in the spring-time Chaucer felt no disposition to devote himself to pursuits purely intellectual; that the love of nature had then its triumph over the love of letters.

These passages furnish positive proof of the truth of the conclusion which we should have a right to draw from the general character of his writings. Whatever view we may take of the accuracy or extent of his acquirements, they show us that we are in the presence of a man who by nature was of a studious disposition, but limited by his duties from giving his mind its full bent, and, it hardly needs to be added, limited by his circumstances from exercising it upon the objects which would appeal most strongly to his tastes. This, therefore, opens before us a not uninstructive field of inquiry. Independent of the results that may be reached in Chaucer's own case, it can hardly fail to be a matter of some value, and perhaps a source of some interest, to ascertain as far as possible what were the books upon which a scholar of the fourteenth century, such as was the poet, would have

[1] Pleasure, amusement. [2] Unless.

the inclination or find the opportunity to read. As an Englishman it would be reasonable to expect him to be familiar with the literature, so far as the term can then be applied to it, of his own language. That tongue was his birthright. But, however useful it may have been, it could reveal to him little worth knowing. Still less could it furnish him with anything to inspire. That he was acquainted with what was written in it, such as it was, it is almost unnecessary to remark. It is evident, from what he himself says, that he had read the most famous of the romances that then existed in the English tongue. It is equally evident that he felt for them just the least possible respect. In the tale of Sir Thopas, which he professes himself to deliver, he specifically mentions 'Horn Childe,' 'Sir Bevis of Hampton,' 'Sir Guy,' 'Sir Ypotis,' 'Lybeaus Disconus,' all of which we know, and also 'Pleyndamour,' which we do not know. Besides this, he refers to 'Sir Perceval of Galles,' the hero of another romance. There is evidence, also, that he was familiar with several other poems of a nature essentially similar, though he does not happen to give their names. The skill with which he satirized the works of this kind could only have been shown by one who had made sufficient study of them to penetrate thoroughly into their spirit. He introduces details exactly in their manner; he burlesques incidents and speeches from them; he employs their tricks of expression; and, above all, he reproduces perfectly the jog-trot of their movement.

But the literature of the world worth reading for itself has always been confined to a very few languages. Of

these English was not at that time one. To be a scholar in the very lowest sense of the word, Chaucer would have to be acquainted, to some extent, with other literatures than the one which was his by the mere fact of birth. The first question, then, that naturally arises in regard to his attainments is, what are the tongues with which he was familiar? Greek was but little known to Western Europe. He would have found it difficult, if not actually impossible, to learn it, even if he had possessed the desire. It evinces, however, the naturally studious bent of Chaucer's mind that he became acquainted with three languages besides his own—Latin, French, and Italian. These contained most of the modern literature as yet produced that was worth perusal. To be an educated man at all, one had to know Latin. The knowledge of the world was then locked up in it. Without that key access was denied to nearly every branch of learning. In some things French could take its place, but it could not fill it. Both of these tongues were the common possession of every one in the England of the fourteenth century who aimed to be a man of letters at all. In knowing them Chaucer would have no special distinction over many of his contemporaries. With Italian it must have been different. It is not to be presumed that a knowledge of that language was common, though the fame of the great poet who had already made it illustrious had extended into distant lands, and stimulated the desire to know directly what was so widely bruited. There were, doubtless, opportunities at the brilliant court of Edward III. to acquire it from native teachers, but they were not likely to be

often improved. Of Chaucer's acquaintance with it we are certain; and there is nothing violent in the assumption that, because of his acquaintance with it, he was twice withdrawn from his regular duties and sent on a distant mission to the country where it was spoken.

It is an illustration of the curious fortune that has attended Chaucer, that one of the most exact of his biographers was the one to deny him knowledge of Italian. The reason of the view is worth quoting, for it is an excellent specimen of the fatal fatuousness that seems to affect the mental faculties of every one who has to deal with the poet. "That Chaucer was not acquainted with Italian," wrote Nicolas, "may be inferred from his not having introduced an Italian quotation into his works, redundant as they are with Latin and French words and phrases." This, under any condition of things, would be basing a very strong affirmative statement upon a negative. But there is nothing in the condition of things to justify it. In the first place, the poet's writings are not redundant with Latin and French words and phrases, familiar, as they doubtless would have been, to the men he was addressing. On the contrary, they are comparatively few, as might naturally be expected in the case of a writer who was a man of genius, and had not in his composition the least tincture of the pedant. But even had they been three times as numerous as they actually are, the omission of quotations from the Italian would prove nothing. Chaucer introduced French and Latin quotations, so far as he introduced them at all, because his readers understood them. He did not introduce Italian ones

for the very sufficient reason that they would not have understood them. In employing phrases taken from the two former tongues, Chaucer, as Kissner has observed, was "sure of his public."[1]

Nicolas further remarked that there was no proof that Chaucer knew anything of Italian. Yet, as early as the sixteenth century, Thynne had pointed out that the Knight's tale was a translation and adaptation of the *Teseide* of Boccaccio. Even if we assume that the fact had been wholly forgotten during the two centuries that followed, both Warton and Tyrwhitt had revived the knowledge of it, and had published the evidence of its truth. Yet Nicolas, one of the most careful of biographers, was capable of making the assertion that has been quoted about the poet's ignorance of Italian. In this view he was followed by Craik in his 'History of English Literature.' Instances of this perverse method of reasoning have been exhibited so often in the case of Chaucer, and to some extent by the most cautious of his biographers and the very best of his critics, that a feeling of self-distrust tends to come over the student of his works for fear that he, too, in spite of his utmost efforts, may be swept along by the stream of tendency which impels a man to the utterance of some absurd view about the poet, or to the occupation of some indefensible position.

For the knowledge of three languages besides his own, any one would be regarded with respect in our day. Chaucer, accordingly, could not have failed to

[1] *Chaucer in seinen Beziehungen zur Italienischen Literatur.* Inaugural-Dissertation von Alfons Kissner. Bonn, 1867, p. 12.

meet with it in an age when familiarity with foreign tongues implied a great deal more than it does now. It was surely no slight achievement for one so busily occupied as was he, and with resources so limited at his command. Yet, while unstinted praise can be awarded him for what he accomplished under the circumstances, it would be a mistake to apply to him the terms which we are in the habit of coupling with high scholarship. In his versions from both the Italian and the Latin he occasionally mistook the sense of his original. This was usually due to his confounding words essentially different in sense, but closely resembling each other in form. In 'Troilus and Cressida,' for example, the Italian *vallo*, a 'rampart,' is rendered by 'valley,' as if it were the Italian *valle*. In Boethius he twice confused the Latin *clavus*, a 'rudder,' with *clavis*, a 'key,' though the former, in one instance, had joined with it *gubernaculum*, a word with the same meaning.[1] In the 'House of Fame' he mistook the ablative plural *pernicibus*, from the adjective *pernix*, 'swift,' for the ablative plural *perdicibus*, from the noun *perdix*, a 'partridge.' The result was that in his rendering of Virgil's account, instead of furnishing the goddess with rapid wings, he bestowed upon her the wings of a partridge. All these errors may have been due to the imperfection of the manu-

[1] For the former of these statements see the comparison of Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida* with Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, made by William M. Rossetti, and published by the Chaucer Society in 1883, part ii., p. 234; for the latter, Chaucer's translation of the *Consolatio Philosophiæ* of Boethius, edited by Dr. Morris (1868), Introduction, p. xv. I wish here to express the great obligations I have been under to the scholarly work of Rossetti, which has been of incalculable assistance to me on many points, besides the information it contained on the specific subject to which it was devoted.

scripts to which he had access; but from the last one the grammatical construction should have saved a scholar. Other lapses could be pointed out and, indeed, have been pointed out. They are, however, of the same general nature as those already mentioned, and are of no more consequence. They do not indicate that Chaucer was not fairly versed in the tongues from which he made translations. They simply show that the proficiency he had reached in them was not up to the standard imputed to him in the eulogies constantly pronounced upon his learning. He may have had, and doubtless did have, a far keener enjoyment of what he read in foreign languages—he certainly got far more out of it—than most men before or since his time whose technical acquaintance with them has been vastly greater. Here, however, we are not considering his appreciation, but his acquirement. The last was certainly respectable. The extent of it becomes at once apparent as soon as we proceed to make up the list of the authors whom he either knew or knew about. In the discussion of these we begin with those who wrote in the tongue which in the time of the poet's childhood, though not the mother, might fairly be called the stepmother, tongue of Englishmen.

With the French authors, especially those who were his contemporaries or his immediate predecessors, there is every reason to suppose that Chaucer was familiar. This must have been the case almost inevitably. Yet, outside of the *Roman de la Rose*—his relations to which will be considered a little later—there is left us but little direct evidence of the fact. The number of writ-

ers to whom obligation on his part can be traced are surprisingly few. Besides the work just mentioned, there are only two instances in which positive proof has been furnished of his translating any complete or independent production directly from French poetry. These two together fall in his versions considerably below three hundred lines. One of them—the 'Complaint of Venus'—as he tells us himself in the envoy, is a close rendering, especially as regards metre, of a poem of Graunsoun, whom he styles the flower of those that write in the French tongue. But the original of the English version has disappeared entirely, and French literature hardly recognizes on its rolls the name of an author called Graunsoun, though two or three pieces have been preserved as being of his composition. In some of the manuscripts of Chaucer's translation there is added, after the name of the original writer, the further description of him as "Knight of Savoy." This seems to identify him fully with the Sir Otes de Graunsoun who appears in the public records as having received on November 18, 1393, the grant of a pension of over one hundred and twenty-six pounds a year for services he had rendered, or which were to be rendered, to the English king.[1] From the official records it also appears that his natural lord was the Count of Savoy, and that he had transferred his allegiance to Richard II.

The second instance is that of the 'Prayer to the Virgin Mary,' which commonly goes under the title of 'Chaucer's ABC.' It is taken from the work of Guillaume de Deguilleville, a Cistercian monk, who

[1] Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. vii., p. 761.

died about 1360. He achieved great success in the fourteenth century as the writer of a poem upon the pilgrimage of the soul. In the history of our own literature, too, he has a certain place of his own. Once in about every score of years he is regularly discovered as the source from which Bunyan derived his far more famous production. The *Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine* constituted the first of the three parts which made up the work. It was devoted to the pilgrimage of man while he is in the body. The second relates the experiences of the soul after it is separated from the body, its trial before Michael the provost of heaven, the sights it saw in purgatory, and its final salvation. The third is essentially a life of Christ, compiled from the Evangelists. It is from the first part that Chaucer's production is taken. It is a very free translation, or rather it deserves the name of a paraphrase. If written at the period to which it is usually assigned, it shows that Chaucer had early begun to display the same freedom in the treatment of his material which later became no uncommon characteristic.

The poem entitled the 'Ballad of Visage without Painting,' or, as it has been recently styled, 'Fortune,' is stated on the authority of Shirley, one of the most trustworthy of the copyists, to have been a translation from the French. No original is known to exist. It is, of course, possible that certain slight resemblances between it and the *Roman de la Rose*, and the more marked adaptation of passages from Boethius, may have led to the transcriber's assertion that it was taken from a foreign source. Still, it is not probable. Shirley makes a

definite statement to the effect that the piece was a translation. He does not give it as a rumor. He could hardly, in consequence, have been talking without knowledge. Moreover, the poem, as it has been handed down, bears a witness of its own to the truth of this view. Not only is the title of the whole in French in nearly all of the manuscripts, but in the same tongue are the titles of its various subordinate parts. This is something that was not likely to have happened, had the work been first written in English. It has, besides, the air of a translation, so far as that can be predicated of the productions of an author who had the happy faculty of giving to everything he borrowed the character of originality. Still, this internal evidence, so far as it goes, supports the assertion of the scribe that the poem was taken from the French. From that tongue, indeed, it is not improbable that other of the minor pieces were derived. There is about two or three of them, in particular, a labored and artificial style from which Chaucer's purely original creations are singularly free. They lack also entirely the simplicity and directness which, marking as they do the expression of genuine feeling everywhere, are the special distinction of his manner. In the absence of external evidence, however, that any particular poem is a translation, assertions to that effect can be regarded as nothing more than the utterance of personal opinion.

These are the independent pieces—excluding the 'Romance of the Rose'—that Chaucer is known to have taken directly from French poetry. To its prose-writing he is under much greater obligation. From that source

two of his longer productions were borrowed either in whole or in part. One of these is the Man of Law's tale. The story told in it was also related by Gower in the second book of the 'Confessio Amantis.' Tyrwhitt, who was still under the influence of the once prevalent belief that Gower was in some respects the earlier writer of the two, assumed that here he had anticipated Chaucer, and that to his work the poem written by the latter owed its existence. Wright, in his edition of the 'Canterbury Tales,' remarked that it was probably taken from a French romance. He added that Gower's version appeared to be derived from the chronicle of Nicolas Trivet. This writer was an English Dominican friar who flourished in the earlier half of the fourteenth century. The conjecture of Wright has since been shown to be true of both authors. The original story of Constance, as it appears in the 'Anglo-Norman Chronicle' of Nicolas Trivet, has been edited with an English translation by Mr. Edmund Brock.[1] He has carefully pointed out the resemblances between it and the Man of Law's tale, and shown that of the 1029 lines of which the latter consists, about 350 additional ones are due to the poet, who also condensed and altered several of the incidents of his original. The other piece which Chaucer borrowed calls for no special comment. It is the prose tale of Melibeus which he puts into his own mouth, and secures himself thereby from any suspicion of self-love. It is a translation of what was apparently a popular treatise in the French

[1] *Originals and Analogues of some of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, part i. (Chaucer Society Publications).

tongue, that went under the name of *Le Livre de Melibee et de Dame Prudence.* This, in turn, was a version, made presumably by Jean de Meung, from a Latin work of Albertano of Brescia entitled *Liber Consolationis et Consilii.*

There was another Dominican friar to whom Chaucer was under obligation. This author is commonly called Frère Lorens, but sometimes by the fuller Latinized form of his name, Laurentius Gallus. He was the confessor of Philip III. At the request of that monarch, he produced in 1279 a religious treatise. It is known by various titles, but that which it properly bears is *La Somme de Vices et de Vertus.* This work was one of the most popular of its own time and of the times immediately succeeding. It was translated into many modern languages, among which were the Italian, French, and Provençal. In our own tongue several versions of it appeared both in prose and poetry. The most noted of all in many respects was the very literal translation made of it into the Kentish dialect by Dan Michel of Northgate, under the title of the *Ayenbite of Inwit*, that is, the 'Remorse of Conscience.' Chaucer was certainly thoroughly familiar with the original work, if the Parson's tale be deemed his own composition throughout. Of this, the uniformity of the style as well as the style itself leaves us hardly the slightest ground for doubt. Many chapters of the French treatise were drawn upon for the "morality and virtuous matter" with which the conclusion of his own crowning work was destined to end. There is, indeed, much variation and much addition, and the additions are usually much more interest-

ing than the material that is directly borrowed. A large portion of the two treatises is, however, essentially the same.

The 'Death of Blanche the Duchess' is the one work which has usually been selected as exemplifying the full influence that was exerted over Chaucer by French literature. It may therefore sound surprising that of the 1334 lines of which that poem consists, not more than one hundred have as yet been traced to any French original. One source naturally is the *Roman de la Rose*. Yet there are not fifty lines that by any stretch of language can be said to be derived from that work. Tyrwhitt had remarked that a production like the 'Death of Blanche,' written on a particular occasion, might well have been imagined an original composition. "But," he went on to say, "upon comparing the portrait of a beautiful woman, which M. de la Ravaliere (Poes. du R. de N. Gloss. v. Belee) has cited from MS. du Roi No. 7612, with Chaucer's description of his heroine (ver. 817 et seq.), I find that several lines in the latter are literally translated from the former." He added that it would not, therefore, be surprising if Chaucer should turn out on examination to have borrowed a considerable part of his work from some French poem. Whether the poem that Tyrwhitt read was a production of Guillaume de Machault, a writer who died in the latter half of the fourteenth century, cannot be told without the examination of the manuscript indicated; but as the passage in the 'Death of Blanche' to which his note refers reproduces certain lines from one of the poems of the latter, it is reasonable to assume that this is the case.

At any rate, Machault has for some time past played an important part in the criticism that has dealt with the influences that operated upon the intellectual development of the English author. It is only of late years that this has been made prominent. Chaucer's indebtedness to him had been noticed before. It was reserved for Sandras to set it upon an exalted pinnacle. The 'Death of Blanche,' he told us, was in its general spirit, and often in its details, only a servile imitation of Machault.[1] Two poems of the latter were the sources in particular from which the English work was drawn. One of these was the *Dit du Remède de Fortune*, and the other the *Dit de la Fontaine Amoreuse*. At the end of his volume he printed parallel passages from both authors for the purpose of justifying his assertion. The comparison of these shows that about thirty-six lines are taken from the first poem and about ten from the second. In order to secure even this result, it is necessary to include lines that have nothing corresponding in the words of the original, though expressing the same general idea. To these are to be added seven lines[2] translated from the *Jugemen du Bon Roi de Behaigne*, a poem in which Machault describes the intimacy that existed between himself and the King of Bohemia, who fell at Crecy in 1346. This Chaucer transferred to the mourning knight in the account he gives of the sympathy that prevailed between him and his dead wife. There were other resemblances Sandras assured us he

[1] "Ce poëme qui, dans son ensemble et souvent dans ses détails, n'offre qu'une imitation servile de Machault," etc.—Sandras, *Etude*, p. 95.

[2] Lines 1289–1295.

could point out, but he forbore. Consequently, the obligations to Machault, upon which he had laid so much stress, amounted to about fifty lines, so far as he brought forward any evidence of the fact. The story of Ceyx and Alcyone was, indeed, declared by him to be based upon the similar one contained in the *Dit de la Fontaine Amoreuse*. But though the English poet was doubtless familiar with the French poet's production, his own original, as he told us himself, was the 'Metamorphoses' of Ovid. This point, however, has been disposed of so effectively and effectually by Professor Ten Brink that here it can be passed without further mention.[1]

Of Chaucer's acquaintance with Machault there is no question. The lost work of his, entitled 'The Book of the Lion,' was possibly a translation of the poem of the French writer called *Le Dit du Lion*. From this same author, besides the passages indicated by Sandras, are taken also about half a dozen additional lines in the 'Death of Blanche.' There are also a few places in the 'House of Fame' in which reminiscences of his work can be traced, though outside of one couplet it is hardly proper to call them imitations. But it is absurd to term Chaucer, as does Sandras, a disciple of Machault. To speak of the latter as even a favorite of the former is unwarranted. It is in this one poem of the 'Death of Blanche' that we can find any evidence of real familiarity with the French writer. How little this turns out to be, when subjected to careful examination, has been made sufficiently clear. The natural impression which a consideration of all the facts leaves upon the

[1] *Chaucer-Studien*, p. 8 ff.

mind is, that at the time of the composition of this piece the writings of Machault had come to his hand and were fresh in his memory. As a consequence he embodied in the work upon which he then happened to be engaged certain passages that struck his fancy. But his interest in the productions of the French author did not apparently continue. The influence, if it can be so called, that was exerted by the latter was not lasting. Indeed, it is a somewhat strained interpretation to speak of a work of over thirteen hundred lines as owing much of its inspiration to a foreign source when not more than one thirteenth of it, so far as has as yet been discovered, comes from that quarter. This observation concerns, of course, the matter and not the manner; but to whatever works Chaucer's manner was due, it was not to those of Machault.

We come now to productions with which it may be said that Chaucer was acquainted, because he made use, or is supposed to have made use, of them as the foundation of his own. Both Warton and Tyrwhitt were of the opinion that the tale of the Nun's Priest was developed from a fable of Marie of France, consisting of thirty-eight lines. This is the only evidence that can be brought of Chaucer's acquaintance with that author. It is not altogether convincing. Her production does not furnish so much as the skeleton of the English story. More than three fifths of the tale of the Nun's Priest has been told before the incidents recorded by Marie of France are introduced. The original in this instance is, as Wright pointed out, the narrative of the capture of the cock by the fox, as told in the French

Roman de Renart. The composition of this work is asserted to belong to the beginning of the thirteenth century. Here, there is close enough resemblance between the two to justify the claim that, in spite of numerous variations of detail, the broad outlines of the plot of the English poem were derived directly from the French. The changes are many, but in every case they add to the effectiveness of the story.[1] Some slighter resemblances also there are, though it would probably be a mistake to attach to them much importance. References to the same persons and things can be found, as, for instance, to the Emperor Octavian. It may be, too, that it was from this quarter that Chaucer derived his peculiar oath of "by Saint Charity."[2] But while in the light of our present knowledge the Nun's Priest's tale can fairly be said to owe its origin to a known work, no such statement can be made with justice of the Reeve's. Two fabliaux have been printed, having the same general nature, both of which have been thought or declared to be its source. Tyrwhitt was the first to call attention to the one as its possible original. Wright brought to notice the other as its certain one. He printed it in his 'Anecdota Literaria.' In that, and in his subsequent edition of the 'Canterbury Tales,' he asserted that it was the very source from which the English poem was taken. There is nothing to show that

[1] I cannot understand the criticism that objects to Chaucer making "his cock quote learned Latin treatises on dreams." (*Originals and Analogues of the Chaucer Society*, part ii., p. 112.) If anything can heighten the humor of the whole situation, it is the resort to this device. If a cock can be supposed to discourse on dreams at all, there is no difficulty in supposing him familiar with the earliest as well as the latest literature of the subject.

[2] "Par Sainte Charité."—*Roman de Renart*, vol. i., p. 38.

Chaucer ever saw either of these fabliaux, though he may have been familiar with them both. The story in various forms was floating about, and it could have reached him from a dozen different quarters. He could have learned it by hearsay as well as have read it in books. Certainly nothing has as yet been brought to light that in any proper sense is entitled to be called its original.

Chaucer was a literary and may have been a personal friend of Eustache Deschamps. But though he is styled by the latter 'great translator,' he does not appear to have translated anything from the one who so termed him. Yet he can hardly have failed to be well acquainted with the writings of his French contemporary. These were pretty certainly in his possession. The ballade which Deschamps addressed to him is declared in its title to have accompanied the present of his own works. Still, to him not a single line of the English poet has so far been traced. The indebtedness of Chaucer, indeed, to all other French poetry put together is exceedingly slight compared with the obligation he is under to the *Roman de la Rose*. There is a question whether the translation that has come down under his name is his or is not. There is no question, however, as to his intimate acquaintance with the original. He is not merely thoroughly familiar with it; he is profoundly influenced by it. It is responsible for a good deal of the learning with which he has himself been credited. Many of the references to persons and things found in his own works are taken directly from it. They do not imply, at any rate they do not necessitate, any

knowledge on his part of the further sources from which they were obtained. His regard for that poem, moreover, is something that he never outgrew. That in an earlier production, like the 'Death of Blanche,' he should have made use of it, might not seem surprising. But the same statement is true of his very latest work. Nor is the opinion he entertained of this production a matter of mere inference, from the fact that he drew upon it largely for his own material. It is expressed in the most direct and unequivocal terms. In the 'Death of Blanche,' the chamber in which the dreamer fancies himself sleeping is adorned with scenes taken from it in part. The walls, he tells us, were painted with "all the Romance of the Rose." This open avowal of admiration is not limited to the period of youth. A higher tribute even is paid in the Merchant's tale. In the course of the story, Chaucer celebrates the beauty of the garden which the old knight had caused to be made for his special delectation. None equal to it he knew anywhere. The ideal garden which had been created by the genius of Lorris comes, however, into his mind. It leads him to express the impossibility of rivalling the perfection of the one he has in view. Yet, in the very denial, he gives to his predecessor the most unqualified praise in the following lines:

> "For out of doubt, I verily suppose,
> That he that wrote the Romance of the Rose
> Ne could of it the beauty well devise."
>
> Merchant's tale, lines 787–789.

There is, in fact, no other single production that has

so much right to be termed a favorite of Chaucer as this work. The influence it exerted over him was a constant quantity in his literary life, or rather it went on broadening and deepening to the very close of his career. Instances of his imitation of it, and frequently of his translation from it, can be found in every poem of his of any length till we come to the 'Canterbury Tales.' Nor does it cease then and there. Tyrwhitt pointed out that many of the particulars about table manners in the description of the Prioress in the general Prologue were borrowed directly from one of the speeches which the old woman addresses to Bel-Acueil;[1] that phrases and lines and passages scattered up and down the *Roman de la Rose* can be found in the Knight's tale, in the prologue to the tale of the Wife of Bath, and in the Manciple's tale; and that the story of Virginia in the Doctor's tale was expanded from the similar story contained in it, as were also the accounts of Nero and Crœsus in the Monk's tale. Nor did he specify everything that had been drawn from this same source. There is often a transfusion of the spirit as well as a transferrence of the letter. Many of the most striking touches in the account given of the friar in the Prologue are suggested by the picture drawn by the French satirist of False-Semblaunt. The conduct of that personage inspires also the cynical self-revelation which the Pardoner makes of his scandalous practices in the prologue to his own tale. Again, the great creation of the Wife of Bath, of which more will be said elsewhere, owes its conception to the old woman already mentioned, who is set to watch over Bel-Acueil. It has

[1] Lines 14,349–14,363 (Michel).

been enlarged and developed. It has been transported into another atmosphere. It has received the incommunicable touch which genius alone has the secret of imparting. Still, the original suggestion is in the *Roman de la Rose*.

Even in places where Chaucer undoubtedly gives expression to his own deepest personal feelings, he not unfrequently presses into the service an ally he does not need. If there is one thing supremely characteristic of his nature, it is the sentiment he entertains about books. Yet in the very passage in the prologue to the 'Legend of Good Women'[1] in which he speaks of the honor that should be paid them because it is by them alone that the knowledge of the past has been handed down, he adopts, it may be unconsciously, the language of his favorite work. It perhaps ought to be said that it is his favorite work, as regards adaptation, only so far as it is the composition of Jean de Meung. The portion of it composed by Lorris receives from him scant attention in this respect. From that part of the poem which exists for us in the English version he drew but little, and that little consists of nothing more than single words and phrases. This seems to me to support the view that the translation which has come down is his own. Still, there were other reasons besides the fact of a previous rendering that would make him prefer for his own use the continuation of the work. It was the keen observation, the satire, the wit which were contained in that portion that appealed

[1] Compare the sentiment of lines 17–28 of the prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* with that of these lines in the *Roman de la Rose*:

"Car par l'escrit que nous avons,
Les fais des anciens savons;
Si les en devons mercier,
Et loer et regracier."
—Lines 10,381–10,384 (Michel).

to Chaucer. In general terms it may be said that the influence exerted over him by the *Roman de la Rose* was an intellectual rather than a spiritual influence. It was the intellectual element in Jean de Meung's writings that recommended them to his English admirer. Nor was it with his great work alone that the latter was familiar. Two other productions of the French author have lately been pointed out as containing phrases and ideas which have been reproduced in the 'Canterbury Tales.'[1] One of these, a poem of nearly 2200 lines, is entitled *Le Testament de Jean de Mehung;* the other, of about half the length, is called *Les Remonstrances ou La Complaint de Nature à l'Alchymiste Errant.* The resemblances between these and the passages with which they have been compared are slight. Still, they are sufficient to indicate Chaucer's knowledge of both the pieces. All, indeed, of the works of the French author to which he could gain access seem to have been diligently read by the English poet. No one pretends that Jean de Meung was the equal of Chaucer. Yet he had over him an influence far greater than that exerted by much greater men.

At a time when French literature was the only modern literature much known in England, it would be strange if the works that have so far been mentioned exhausted the number in that tongue with which Chaucer was familiar. Fuller research may therefore show an actual or probable acquaintance on his part with authors whose

[1] By Professor Skeat in a letter to the (London) *Academy*, No. 231, April 7, 1888, p. 239. These two pieces are printed at the end of Méon's edition of the *Roman de la Rose.*

names have never been in any way connected with his own. One of these might even now be added to the list, if the existing translation of the *Roman de la Rose* could be attributed to him with certainty. This is Guiot de Provins. He received his name from the town of Provins in the Île-de-France, and flourished in the early part of the thirteenth century. The work upon which his reputation rests is his *Bible*, or 'Book.' The composition of this is ascribed on internal evidence to a date between 1203 and 1208. It is a poem of about twenty-seven hundred lines, slightly didactic, but mainly satirical. It treats in succession of princes and the nobility, of the pope and the various orders of the clergy, and of the members of the learned classes. In the case of the last the author devotes himself specifically to theologians, lawyers, and physicians. His remarks upon each and all can hardly be deemed flattering. Those upon physicians do not differ materially from the criticisms which men, while in good health, are even now in the habit of making. The attack on this same class in lines 5721 to 5744 of the 'Romance of the Rose' in the English version is taken only in part from its own professed original. The play upon words contained in these lines,

> "For fysic gynneth first by fy,
> The phicicien also sothely,"

is purely an addition of the translator. Sandras pointed out that the idea was derived from a similar remark in the work of Guiot de Provins.[1] In that poem several lines are devoted to quibbling upon the first syllable of

[1] Sandras, *Étude sur Chaucer*, p. 39.

fisicien. The interjectional expression of contempt indicated by it is, according to that author, a term precisely indicative of their profession and practice.[1] The further statement in the English version of the *Roman de la Rose*, that the word *phicicien* goes from *fy* to *sy*—a not very brilliant play upon the word *sigh*—is found neither in the original nor in Guiot's *Bible*. While the quibble is obvious enough to have occurred to anybody, and feeble enough to have rejoiced a professional punster, it is not unlikely that it was first suggested to the translator by the corresponding passage in the French poem. If Chaucer be the one who made the version, this would have the effect of adding another name to the list of writers of that nationality with whom he had more or less of an acquaintance.

The names of the French authors whom Chaucer read are unfamiliar, save to the few who make a special study of early French literature. Even the best known of their productions, the *Roman de la Rose*, is but little known. But it is not so with the Italian writers to whom we now come. They still remain what they were then, the foremost authors of the speech in which they wrote. Lapse of time has increased rather than diminished their reputation. They loom up before our eyes larger even than they did before those of their contemporaries. Among the world's most famous men they early took and have since continued to retain a prominent place. To compare with them the French poets who have been mentioned would be like comparing writers of the grade of Shakspeare with writers of the grade of Waller. Yet

[1] Guiot's *Bible*, lines 2581–2593.

it is surely possible that there may be certain stages of individual or of national development in which a Waller may exert temporarily more influence than a Shakspeare. It cannot be permanent, nor can it be very profound. But, without attempting to make a comparative estimate of the influences that operated upon Chaucer from these two quarters, it is enough to say at this point that of his direct indebtedness to Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Dante there is incontestable proof. It was a spiritual influence even more than a purely intellectual one that was exerted over him by the great Italian writers. By them his views of his art were broadened and enlarged. Through them his power of expression gained fuller and ampler development. To them he owed especially an immeasurable increase in his capacity to deal with the deeper problems of man's life and destiny. But in this place it is our province to consider only the extent of his intimacy with their works, so far as this can be gathered from his writings.

To Petrarch there are two direct references. One is the passage in the prologue to the tale of the Clerk of Oxford, which has been relied upon to prove his meeting with that poet.[1] Again, in the Monk's tale he speaks of him as "my master Petrarch."[2] It is the only place in his works in which he seriously gives this designation to any author whatever.[3] Yet in spite of these two tributes to the man, there is very little he takes from his works of any kind. From those written in the Italian lan-

[1] See vol. i., page 67.
[2] Line 335.
[3] In the tale of the *Nun's Priest* in line 527 he ironically terms Geoffrey de Vinesauf "dere mayster soverain."

guage there is scarcely anything at all. What there is of the latter consists of a version of the eighty-eighth sonnet which appears in 'Troilus and Cressida.' It is there attributed to Lollius.[1] The Clerk's tale is taken directly from the Latin prose of Petrarch. This in turn is translated, as is sufficiently well known, from the 'Decameron.' It is there the tenth novel of the tenth day, and consequently the one with which that work concludes. This constitutes the whole of Chaucer's indebtedness to his great contemporary. There is certainly but little on the face of it to prove any great degree of familiarity on his part with the writings of the man for whom he professed an admiration so ardent.

Far different is the case with Boccaccio. Of the Italian authors he is apparently the one with whom the English poet is most familiar. He is the one of the famous three from whom he has borrowed so much that his indebtedness to the others seems insignificant in comparison. But there is, in addition, a fact that strikes the modern reader with surprise. It is to his poetry that Chaucer is under special obligation, and not to his prose. Two productions of Boccaccio, the *Teseide* and the *Filostrato*, are the works that specially concern us here. The former is a poem in twelve books, and is usually spoken of as the first one that was ever written in *ottava rima*. Upon it is based the Knight's tale. The changes and modifications, however, introduced by Chaucer are numerous and important. The twelve books of the *Teseide*, in the

[1] The sonnet beginning *S' amor non è ;* lines 400–420, inclusive, of book i. of *Troilus and Cressida*.

first place, consist of 9896 lines. The Knight's tale consists of but 2250. This of itself would be sufficient to show that the original had undergone abridgment on an extensive scale. But a close comparison proves the existence of a much wider divergence between the two. The use made by Chaucer of the *Teseide* has been clearly marked by Mr. Henry Ward in his side-notes to two of the manuscripts contained in the Six-text edition of the 'Canterbury Tales.' From these it appears that of the 2250 lines of the Knight's tale, 270 only were directly translated from the Italian original, 374 bear a general likeness to it, and 132 a slight likeness.[1] This leaves 1474 lines, or about two thirds of the tale, as either invented by Chaucer himself, or taken from some other source than Boccaccio's poem. Still, to that work the plot of the story is due and the general course of the narrative. Nor was it to the Knight's tale that the use of the *Teseide* was limited. Short extracts from the Italian poem appear in three other productions. Tyrwhitt pointed out that sixteen of the ninety-eight stanzas of the 'Parliament of Fowls' had been translated from its seventh book.[2] The first three stanzas of 'Anelida and Arcite' are taken from the opening stanzas of the first book of the *Teseide*. The eighth, ninth, and tenth stanzas of the former poem bear enough general resemblance to the eleventh and twelfth stanzas of the second book of the latter to make it certain that these were the

[1] See Furnivall's Temporary Preface to the Six-text Edition of *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, pp. 104 and 105, in which the results of Mr. Ward's work are summed up.

[2] Stanzas 51–66, inclusive, of the seventh book of the *Teseide* are rendered by stanzas 27–42, inclusive—omitting stanza 30—of the *Parliament of Fowls;* but in some instances the order of the stanzas is transposed in the two poems.

verses that Chaucer had in mind.[1] In the 'Troilus and Cressida' the first stanza of the fifth book is also founded upon and partly translated from the first stanza of the ninth book of the *Teseide*. The following stanza of the English poem is taken in the same way and to the same extent from the first stanza of the second book.[2] Again, three stanzas—259, 260, and 261—of this same fifth book are translated from the first three stanzas of the eleventh book.[3] This whole statement makes evident how great was the hold which the Italian poem had upon Chaucer's mind, and how long a time it lasted.

'Troilus and Cressida' is founded in a similar way upon another poem of Boccaccio, called the *Filostrato*. In this instance there has not been a contraction, but an expansion. The comparison made by Rossetti between the two productions enables us to state definitely the exact degree of indebtedness on the part of the English writer. The *Filostrato* is divided into nine books and contains 5704 lines. 'Troilus and Cressida' is in five books and contains 8239 lines. This is proof of itself that much that appeared in the latter poem came from some other source than the former. But Rossetti's comparison shows that only 2730 lines of the original were used in any form by Chaucer, and that these he had compressed into 2583. This leaves 5656 lines for the English poet either to have invented himself or to have borrowed from some other quarter. It will be seen, therefore, that the proportion of use he made of his original is about the same in this poem as in the Knight's tale.

[1] See Ten Brink's *Studien*, p. 49 ff.

[2] *Chaucer's 'Troylus and Cryseyde' compared with Boccaccio's 'Filostrato,'* translated by Wm. Michael Rossetti, p. 232.

[3] *Studien*, p. 58.

One third was taken directly or indirectly from Boccaccio. The remaining two thirds is in each case either his own invention or is drawn from sources other than the Italian work upon which his own is founded. About the comparative treatment of the subject by the two writers there will always be difference of opinion, as there will be about the merits of the 'Troilus and Cressida' itself, varying from the singular estimate of Scott, who spoke of it as "a long and somewhat dull poem,"[1] to Rossetti's declaration that it is "perhaps the most beautiful narrative poem of considerable length in the English language."[2]

This comprises Chaucer's indebtedness to the poetry of Boccaccio. It has been a common statement that several of his tales were borrowed from the 'Decameron.' To that he is said to have owed, in particular, the plan of his own great work. I place myself in opposition to what is rather a current than a well-considered opinion, in maintaining that there is not a particle of evidence that Chaucer had ever seen or read a line of the 'Decameron.' There are four tales which are frequently spoken of as having been drawn directly from that source. The Shipman's tale is said to be founded upon the first novel of the eighth day; the Reeve's upon the sixth novel of the ninth day; the Franklin's upon the fifth novel of the tenth day; and the Clerk's upon the tenth novel of the tenth day. The Merchant's tale has likewise two or three incidents essentially of the same character as the ninth novel of the seventh day. It

[1] Edition of Dryden, vol. vi., Introduction to the play of *Troilus and Cressida*.

[2] *Prefatory Remarks to Wm. M. Rossetti's Comparison, etc.*, p. viii.

is easy to dispose of the only one of these instances in which the 'Decameron' has furnished even remotely the original. This is the story of Griselda. That, as has already been mentioned, was taken directly from Petrarch's Latin translation of Boccaccio's Italian. Between the others which have been compared there is a general resemblance in the plot, and occasionally a resemblance in some of the details. But the resemblance is very general. While the theme is the same, the variations are so wide that it is hardly possible to assume, in a single given case, that the English writer followed the story told by the Italian. For one of these tales—the Reeve's—two other supposed originals have been unearthed. Though these can in no proper sense be called Chaucer's originals, the incidents contained in them bear a much closer resemblance to what he wrote than those found in Boccaccio's narrative. Stories of the kind recorded in the 'Decameron' may be said to have been at that time in the air. They were the property of any one who chose to use them. They could be varied or modified to suit any taste or design. Collections of them were made before Boccaccio wrote. It is only owing to the exquisite skill with which his versions are told that they have come to supplant the others then in existence.

Full as baseless seems the idea that Chaucer borrowed the plan of the 'Canterbury Tales' from the 'Decameron.' One may feel justified in going even further than this. There is not the slightest proof that Chaucer had a knowledge of the existence of that work. There is some evidence that leads to the conviction that he had no knowledge of it. Assuredly nothing would strike us as

specially strange about such a view if we could look at matters of this sort with the eyes of the fourteenth and not of the nineteenth century; if, in particular, we could disabuse our minds of the ideas about books which the habits and practices of the present day tend to generate and to keep alive. The knowledge of them did not then travel rapidly. Their multiplication was a slow process, and this of itself would prevent their wide circulation at the outset. The collected 'Decameron' appeared in 1353. Yet it is evident from the date of the celebrated letters containing his Latin version of the story of Griselda which Petrarch sent to Boccaccio that it was not until 1373 that the former had received or read the work as a whole. Even conceding this date to be incorrect—and this there seems no reason to presume—it is clear that years had gone by after the completion of the collection before it had reached the hands of the one living Italian whom its author most admired. It is accordingly no violent supposition that a contemporary poet belonging to another nation may not only have never seen the 'Decameron,' but may never even have heard of it. However this may be, the dissimilarity between the whole conduct of the two works is so great that those who take the view that the plan of the later was suggested by that of the earlier have also to assume that it was subjected to so many modifications and alterations as finally to leave it with the slightest possible resemblance to its theoretical original. Of late years, however, there has been less and less disposition to attribute the idea of the 'Canterbury Tales' to this source. None the less does the desire exist to discover some author or some

production that may be held responsible for it. So strong and so general is this feeling that one comes to have a sense of trepidation in venturing to make the reckless and apparently revolutionary suggestion that the plan of the 'Canterbury Tales' is something that might have occurred unaided to Chaucer himself.

If the poet were acquainted with the 'Decameron,' it is certainly a matter of legitimate surprise that he should have taken the tale of Griselda from Petrarch's Latin version, instead of Boccaccio's Italian original. His lack of familiarity with the latter author's great work in his native tongue is also emphasized by the acquaintance he displays with his writings in Latin prose. Though the consideration of these strictly belongs elsewhere, it is, on the whole, best to give a brief account of them here. Three, at least, of the four productions of Boccaccio in the Latin tongue Chaucer knew about, and to some extent unquestionably knew. He has not made a great deal of use of them, but he has made enough to render that fact apparent. From two of them—the treatises *De Casibus Virorum et Feminarum Illustrium* and *De Claris Mulieribus*—he derived some of the incidents, and in a few instances the phraseology, that can be found in the 'Legend of Good Women' and in the Monk's tale. It was to these works he referred in the prologue to the latter piece. After saying that tragedies—as he defined the word—were commonly written in verse, he added,

"In prose eek be endited many one."

The fullest and most direct obligation he is under to either of these treatises is in the story of Zenobia, as

given in the Monk's tale. This is largely based upon the account of the queen contained in the book about famous women, together with some additional particulars introduced from the more general work.[1]

But these treatises furnished him with much more than a few isolated facts. They set before him a model. They led him into the composition of productions of a like character. There seems no reason to doubt that his two collections of lugubrious narratives were suggested by the two similar collections which Boccaccio had brought together. It was at bottom a false taste, and in process of time Chaucer learned to look upon it with disfavor. The third work of the Italian writer — *De Genealogia Deorum Gentilium et Heroum* — the English poet had frequently consulted, if he had not fully mastered. It was essentially a dictionary of ancient mythology, and was prepared on a somewhat extensive scale. It speedily became the great storehouse from which men of that time drew their knowledge of the details of classic fable. Among the number who were indebted to it were Chaucer and Gower. In the 'Legend of Good Women' the story of Hypermnestra owes certain particulars to this work. It is probably the authority also for representing Phyllis as the daughter of Lycurgus, King of Thrace,[2] instead of Sithon, who usually appears as her father in classical story. Lycurgus, indeed, occupies so prominent a place in this mythological dictionary that it seems reasonable to suppose that it was from

[1] See Tyrwhitt's note on line 14,253 and Skeat's *Prioresses Tale*, etc., 3d edition, p. 182 ff.

[2] *De Genealogia Deorum*, lib. xi., cap. 25. The chapter is entitled "De Phyllide Lycurgi filia."

that source that he was introduced into the Knight's tale.[1] There are undoubtedly several other incidents taken from this treatise, though it is hardly possible to assert positively in most cases that the knowledge the poet displays was derived from this particular work to the exclusion of some other.

In the course of his account of Zenobia, in the Monk's tale, Chaucer refers those who desire a fuller history of the queen's life to his master, Petrarch,

> "That writ enough of this, I undertake."

Though Petrarch is named here, it is really Boccaccio to whom the reader is advised to go. This leads at once to the consideration of another one of the mysteries in which the career and writings of Chaucer so supremely abound. Boccaccio is the Italian writer to whom he is most directly and fully indebted. But he is an author whose name never appears in his pages. How did it come about? It is certainly something entirely foreign to the English poet's ordinary course of conduct. Chaucer delights in naming the writers from whom he drew his materials, especially if he has drawn from them much. Even those he uses slightly are mentioned, while his references are frequent to those he uses constantly. But the one Italian author to whom he owes most either does not appear at all, or appears under the name of Petrarch or of Lollius. Of the latter name something will be said later. Tyrwhitt, in reference to the account of Zenobia, taken from Boccaccio but ascribed to Petrarch, suggested that perhaps the book of the former had fallen

[1] *De Genealogia Deorum*, lib. xi., cap. 22.

into Chaucer's hands under the name of the latter. Sandras, with that tone of candid depreciation which seems to have excited the admiration of many critics, affirmed that the English poet was amusing himself with his readers, and deceiving them of set purpose; that when, for instance, he named Lollius, he invariably had Boccaccio in mind; and that Lydgate complacently entered into the imposition perpetrated by his master. There is nothing in Chaucer's treatment of other writers to give this supposition not an air of probability, but even of rationality. That a man who takes pains to speak of his work as not his own, even when it is mainly original, should, for some unaccountable reason, be anxious to hide under a false name the famous author from whom a portion of it was taken, is one of those desperate attempts at clearing up a subject which serve no other purpose than to make it darker.

It is perhaps impossible for us ever to know with certainty the cause of Chaucer's failure to mention Boccaccio's name. Nothing but individual opinions can be expressed in the matter. These can have only the weight of opinions, and never that of arguments. To me there seems only one plausible explanation of Chaucer's course. This is, that, while he knew well certain of Boccaccio's writings, he knew nothing whatever of the author, not even his name. Such a condition of things would, under the circumstances, be absolutely impossible in our day. Nor is it easy to accept it as true in the instance of a man of the fourteenth century who had made at least two journeys into Italy. It is rendered even more difficult to accept, because, when Chaucer was

in that country in 1373, he appears to have gone to Florence; and in 1373 a chair for the study of Dante had just been established in the university of that city. This Boccaccio had been called upon to fill. As the first lecture was delivered on the 23d of October, Chaucer could hardly have heard it; but he might well have heard of the new professorship and the new professor. Still, in the business to which we are reduced of groping after probabilities, every one is under the necessity of selecting the probability that commends itself most favorably to his own judgment. I am even disposed to go further, and say that all the writings of Boccaccio with which Chaucer was familiar he believed to be the productions of some one else, and, moreover, that this some one else he believed to be Petrarch. The suggestion or suspicion that this may have been the case has been expressed with reference to two works by Tyrwhitt and Rossetti. The latter, indeed, furnishes strong corroborative testimony. He asserts that Pierre Seigneur de Beauveau, who, towards the close of the fourteenth century, made a French prose version of the *Filostrato*, states positively that the Italian work was written by a Florentine poet named Petrarch.[1] The acceptance of this view certainly adds nothing to our difficulties, and removes some of those previously existing. It will explain the failure to mention the name of Boccaccio. It will explain the reference to Petrarch as the authority for the account of Zenobia contained in the Monk's tale. It will explain the epithet of 'master' given by Chaucer to the same poet, for which there is now little justifica-

[1] Rossetti's *Comparison*, etc., Prefatory Remarks, p. vii.

tion in the use he made of his writings. It will explain the two mentions of Lollius in 'Troilus and Cressida' as being of one and the same person, and not, as now, of two different ones. It will explain the further reference to Lollius in the 'House of Fame' as one of the authors who had been concerned in the Trojan story. Among these Petrarch, as the assumed writer of the *Filostrato*, would have to be enrolled. All these things it will do. Unfortunately, there is one supremely important thing it will not do. It will not explain Lollius, and how or why it happened that Boccaccio, or anybody else, had received that name.

Dante is the third and greatest of the Italian authors with whose writings Chaucer was familiar. Of his admiration for him he leaves us in no uncertainty. References to him personally are not unfrequent in his works. In the Wife of Bath's tale he is termed "the wise poet of Florence." In the Monk's tale he is introduced as "the great poet of Italy." In the Friar's tale he is coupled with Virgil as the revealer of the secrets of the infernal world. In a similar way, and for a similar purpose, he is joined with the same author and with Claudian in the 'House of Fame.' In the 'Legend of Good Women,' as in the tale of the Wife of Bath, the short extract that is taken from his poems is accompanied in each case with the specific mention of his name. In addition to this, we have the precise declaration of Lydgate that Chaucer wrote "Dante in English." But, as has already been observed, this is a statement that probably rests not upon the knowledge of the disciple, but upon the supposed assertion of the master

himself.[1] With the information we have now at our command, the remark cannot, therefore, be made to relate to anything else than to the extracts from the writings of the Italian poet which the English poet introduced into his own with the express mention of the author's name. These translations may well have been thought by Lydgate to be far more extensive than they actually are. Especially is this the case in the tale of the Wife of Bath. In that the dividing line between what Chaucer composed and what he translated could never have been made out by any one who was not conversant with his original.

Not at the present time is any one likely to dispute Chaucer's thorough familiarity with Dante. But of late years there has been a disposition to exaggerate the indebtedness of the former poet to the latter. The principal passages which the English writer borrowed from the Italian were pointed out near the beginning of the century by Cary in the notes to his translation of the *Divina Commedia*.[2] But a number of workers have since been engaged in discovering new obligations as well as in rediscovering and in enforcing old ones. For this purpose the productions of the two authors have been subjected to almost microscopic examination, in order to bring to light additional incidents and lines, and even words, which the one may have suggested to the other. There is no resemblance so superficial, no reference so common, that it has not been pressed into this service. There is no fact so notorious that Chaucer's

[1] See vol. i., p. 425.

[2] Cary's translation of the *Inferno* was published in 1806; of the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, in 1813.

knowledge of it has not been traced to this particular source. The method adopted belongs to the Macedon and Monmouth style of reasoning. It is not too much to say that the kind of evidence which Shakspeare represents Fluellen as using to prove a likeness between Henry V. and Alexander the Great gives us a very fair conception of the nature of many of the arguments that have been paraded as specimens of the resemblances between the English and the Italian author, and especially of the points of contact that exist between the 'House of Fame' in particular and the 'Divine Comedy.' There is a rock in Chaucer; it is the identical rock mentioned by Dante. There is in Chaucer a large plain of sand devoid of animal and vegetable life. There is likewise in one place in Dante a vast desert, and in still another place a plain of arid and thick sand which rejects from its bed every plant. Singular as the fact may seem to some, it is nevertheless matter of record that this same characteristic feature of desert land has been occasionally observed even by men who were not poets. Again, the 'House of Fame' is in three books; the 'Divine Comedy' is in three books. Dante is guided by Virgil; Chaucer is upborne by an eagle. Dante beheld certain things; Chaucer also beheld certain things. They were not the same as those the Italian writer beheld, but the inference is that it would never have occurred to the English author to behold anything had not the Italian author shown him the way. Let it not be supposed that what has just been said is a travesty of the proofs that have been brought forward. The instances given are some of the veritable proofs themselves that have been

adduced. So much has been made of these vague and illusory resemblances that it is desirable to ascertain with reasonable precision what are the direct obligations to the Italian poet that can be shown to exist without question on the part of the English.

It is to be observed, in the first place, that but few lines or ideas which can be traced to Dante are to be found in Chaucer's latest and principal work. This would naturally, whether untruly or not, lead to the inference that the influence exerted by the former over the latter was neither profound nor permanent. The 'Canterbury Tales' contain but three marked instances of indebtedness. One of these occurs in the invocation to the Virgin, near the beginning of the Second Nun's tale—which, it is to be added, is a comparatively early production. There, as Cary pointed out, sixteen lines owe their origin, in a greater or less degree, to a passage in the thirty-third canto of the *Paradiso*. For the story of Ugolino, Count of Pisa, in the Monk's tale, Chaucer himself refers us to Dante. It is unquestionable that he made use of the thirty-third canto of the *Inferno*, in which this tragedy is told, though he does not seem to have confined himself to it. At least, he varies somewhat from it, and introduces details that are not to be found in the narrative as there recorded. These, with the three lines translated in the Wife of Bath's tale from the seventh canto of the *Purgatorio*, and with a very few scattered lines in other tales,[1] compose all the specific borrowings or adaptations from the Italian poet that have so far been pointed out in the English author's greatest work.

[1] *E. g.*, line 636 of *Knight's tale* from the *Purgatorio*, i., 20.

It is, therefore, in his other writings that Chaucer's obligations to Dante must be discovered, if they exist on any grand scale. Instances of these have been indicated in 'Anelida and Arcite,' in 'Troilus and Cressida,' in the 'Legend of Good Women,' in the 'Parliament of Fowls,' and in the 'House of Fame.' The extent of these will be set forth with sufficient detail to show their character. The first one need not detain us. A line, or rather phrase, in it has been suggested by one in the *Purgatorio*.[1] From the 'Legend of Good Women' there is a passage about envy, which, as the poet himself tells us, is taken from Dante. It comprises four lines.[2] In 'Troilus and Cressida,' a much longer poem, the proportion of indebtedness cannot be said to be any greater. Cary pointed out that the first three lines of its last stanza, embodying the invocation to the Trinity, was a translation of three lines in the fourteenth canto of the *Paradiso*.[3] Dante's celebrated words to the effect that the greatest of sorrows is the remembrance, while in misery, of happier times[4] have been said to be the origin of the following passage containing a similar idea in 'Troilus and Cressida:'

> "For of Fortúnès sharp adversity,
> The worstè kind of ínfortúne is this,
> A man to have been in prosperity,
> And it remember when it passèd is."[5]

But the thought contained in these words is taken by

[1] Line 211 from *Purgatorio*, xii., 20.

[2] Lines 358–361 from the *Inferno*, xiii., 64–66.

[3] *Paradiso*, xiv., lines 28–30.

[4] *Inferno*, v., 121–123.

[5] iii., 1625–1628.

Dante himself from the treatise of Boethius on the 'Consolation of Philosophy.'[1] The 'Consolation of Philosophy,' however, was a work with which Chaucer was even more familiar than he was with the 'Divine Comedy.' His prose translation of this passage is nearer to his verse than are the lines of the Italian poet. "This," Boethius says in the English version, when speaking of his former prosperity, "is thing that greatly smarteth me, when it remembereth me: for in all adversity of fortune the mostly unsely[2] kind of contrarious fortune is to have been wealful."[3] The comparison in the lines at the beginning of the second book of 'Troilus and Cressida' is probably due, as Professor Ten Brink suggests, to that at the opening of the *Purgatorio*.[4] Besides this, there is but one other extract—and that consisting of but two lines—that can be referred directly to Dante.[5] At least, no more than these are pointed out by Rossetti in his comparison of 'Troilus and Cressida' with the *Filostrato*. That no further obligation is recorded by a scholar intimately acquainted with both authors may be taken as almost proof positive that none others exist. It is therefore fairly safe to assert that the precise extent of Chaucer's obligation to Dante in this poem of more than eight thousand lines extends at most to ten, and is probably limited to five, lines.

When we come to the 'Parliament of Fowls,' we find a more frequent use of Dante, or, perhaps it would be

[1] Book ii., prose 4.
[2] Unhappy.
[3] Prosperous.
[4] *Chaucer-Studien*, p. 80.
[5] *Troilus and Cressida*, iv., 225–227, from *Inferno*, iii., 112–114.

better to say, we are more frequently reminded of him. The two verses which are written over the entrance to the garden of Venus are undoubtedly suggested by the opening of the third canto of the *Inferno*, which contains the famous inscription over the gate that leads to the abode of those whom all hope has abandoned. Still, they are an imitation and not a translation. The subject is too different to admit of any transferrence of language or thought. Besides this, the introduction of Africanus may fairly be deemed in its inception as an imitation of the Italian poet in putting himself under the guidance of Virgil. But here, again, all resemblance ceases with the fact mentioned. The part performed by these two characters in the poems furnishes no further ground for comparison. Outside of these particular suggestions, there is nothing in the scope or conduct of the production to indicate any special indebtedness to the 'Divine Comedy.' There are, however, four lines directly translated from it.[1]

It is evident that all the lines in the poems mentioned that can be traced without question to Dante do not, even if taken together, mount up to a very formidable number. There remains, therefore, only the 'House of Fame.' Upon this work those who insist that Chaucer was especially under the influence of the Italian poet have concentrated their strength. The views that have been put forth upon this point can, in many cases, be justly termed extravagant. The advocates of them have not been content with the assertion that in this

[1] Lines 85 and 86 from *Inferno*, ii., 1–3; lines 169 and 170 from *Inferno*, iii., 19 and 20.

production Chaucer is, on the whole, under greater obligation to Dante than in any other single one of his works. It is not a relative indebtedness upon which they insist, but an absolute one. "The groups of poets, of minstrels, of jongleurs," says Sandras, "as well as the categories of the suppliants who came to ask for forgetfulness, celebrity, solid glory, empty notoriety, are imitations from the hierarchy which rules in the country of the souls, such as it is revealed to Dante." Professor Ten Brink takes even more advanced ground. The 'House of Fame,' according to him, not only owes numerous details to the 'Divine Comedy,' but also its general character and its inspiration. It is, in fact, a light and humorous counterpart of that work. Another German scholar has gathered together a long list of resemblances, or supposed resemblances, between the two poems.[1] More extreme indeed than that of any one else is the position of Professor Skeat. He asserts in all seriousness that the 'House of Fame' is the translation to which reference is made by Lydgate, when he said that Chaucer wrote "Dante in English." Beyond this utterance it is hardly possible to go.

That at the time of writing the 'House of Fame' Chaucer was particularly interested in Dante cannot reasonably be disputed. That he introduced into his own work some passages taken from the 'Divine Comedy,' and that he imitated others in that production, is just as undeniable. Cary long ago pointed out the two

[1] "Chaucer's 'House of Fame' in seinem Verhältniss zur Divina Commedia," von Dr. A. Rambeau, in *Englische Studien*, vol. iii., p. 209 ff.

most conspicuous instances of these adaptations in the introductory lines, containing the invocations, which open the second and third books of the English poem. This same fact has since been rediscovered a number of times. But there are several other places which indicate familiarity with Dante on the part of Chaucer. They are not important. They do not involve extensive employment either of his language or ideas. Still, they exist. No one would think of underrating the obligation they imply; but this is quite another thing from giving it the character of wholesale indebtedness which has been ascribed to it by some modern scholars. The comparisons and imitations that have been brought forward to bolster up this view of the two works are frequently of the vaguest and most illusory nature. They may have been suggested to Chaucer by what he found in Dante. They may have been suggested to him by what he found in some other author. They may have occurred independently to himself. For illustration, it was not necessary for him to go to Italy to be reminded of the particular kind of noise occasioned by the humming of bees. Yet this is one of the adaptations upon which special stress is laid. As it is much closer than many of them, it may be well to give it in its entirety, in order to make clear the exact character of many of the imitations that are produced as proofs of the indebtedness of the English poet to the Italian. Chaucer, in the 'House of Fame,' in describing the approach of the suppliants to the goddess, announces their coming after this fashion:

"But while that I beheld this sight,
I heard a noise approachèn blive,[1]
That fared as been[2] do in a hive,
Again here[3] time of oútflyíng." 1520–1523.

According to the view of those who hold the theory of the special Dantean inspiration of this poem, the passage just quoted is borrowed from the opening of the sixteenth canto of the *Inferno*. This, in Longfellow's translation, reads as follows:

"Now was I where was heard the reverberation
Of water falling into the next round,
Like to that humming which the beehives make."

While Chaucer may have had the illustration suggested to him by the passage in Dante, there is nothing extravagant in the assertion that it is one which may have occurred to hundreds of persons who have been so far from reading it in the 'Divine Comedy' that they have not even been aware of the existence of that work.

Moreover, several of the instances which are invariably and in all likelihood justly introduced as illustrations of Chaucer's indebtedness to the great Italian poet are made to imply much more of an obligation on his part than in any proper sense they can be said to furnish. The poet Statius, for example, born at Naples, was spoken of by Dante as a native of Toulouse.[4] The same error is committed by Chaucer. It is not improbable, certainly not impossible, that he was led into it by the authority of the Italian work; though there were, doubtless, other sources of misinformation accessible to

[1] Speedily. [2] Bees. [3] Against their. [4] *Purgatorio*, xxi., 89.

him from which it could have been derived. But if we assume that his statement was adopted from the 'Divine Comedy,' this would prove nothing more than his acquaintance with that work; it would not prove that he was specially under its influence. The use made of his introduction of the eagle into the 'House of Fame' is even a more marked illustration of the unreasonable lengths to which his indebtedness is pushed. In this particular matter Chaucer is under far greater obligation to Ovid than to Dante. There is an eagle in the ninth canto of the *Purgatorio*. But there is also an eagle in the tenth book of the *Metamorphoses*, who carries away Ganymede. It is there Jove's own bird, or rather Jove transformed into the shape of his own bird, who bears to heaven the Trojan youth. In the 'House of Fame,' in a similar way, it is Jove's own bird that appears. It is sent by Jove himself, for the express purpose of conveying Chaucer up to the temple of the goddess. It is the legend as told in the *Metamorphoses* that suggests to him the central incident for which the bird is introduced. On the other hand, the eagle that appears to Dante in his dream is responsible for two or three important details. His plumes of gold, the lightning-like manner of his descent, are the characteristics that Chaucer copies. But beyond these resemblances there is nothing that can be traced directly to the 'Divine Comedy.' Above all, there is nothing in the slightest degree corresponding in the parts that the eagles play in the two works.

The whole extent to which the English poet may be incontestably said to be indebted directly to the Italian one in the 'House of Fame' can be hardly made to

stretch beyond twenty lines. Driven by this fact from the support of textual comparison, the advocates of this view are forced to decry the value of the evidence that can be derived from parallel passages, and to declare that it is not so much the details of the 'House of Fame' that have been borrowed from the 'Divine Comedy' as the outline and general scope. It is not that words have been translated, but that the whole treatment has been colored. To this method of comparison there is no limit, save what is imposed by the self-restraint of him who chooses to adopt it. Likenesses can be discovered between any two creations, animal and intellectual, as well as differences. Inferences, satisfactory to himself, can then be drawn by him who makes up his mind to confine his attention to the former, and to ignore entirely the latter. An age like ours, which has seen men, with souls presumably capable of being lost or saved, finding noteworthy resemblances in the writings of Bacon and Shakspeare, need not be expected to experience astonishment at the assertion that any one work is imitated from any other, or is borrowed from any other, or is written under the influence of any other. Yet it must be confessed that obstacles, sufficiently serious, stand in the way of the acceptance of the view that the 'House of Fame' owes its inspiration to the 'Divine Comedy.' In the whole range of imaginative literature, there are hardly two poems which exhibit certain superficial resemblances, and one of which has adopted from the other certain passages and images, that are more divergent in tone and spirit, in subject and in treatment. The difference is felt even by those

who are anxious to regard the one as directly due to the other. "Dante," writes Rambeau, "has in the English imitation lost his epic majesty." It is assuredly a safe statement to make. He further speaks of the solemn and indeed terrible earnestness which marks the whole of the 'Divine Comedy' with the humorous and almost waggish spirit that pervades the 'House of Fame.' "Truly," says Ten Brink, "a work of entirely different character."[1] The truth is, that while Chaucer's admiration and appreciation of Dante was deep and genuine, there was too much difference both in the intellectual and the spiritual nature of the two men for the one to fall profoundly under the influence of the other. Their literary characteristics were too distinct for the former to reproduce much, either of the manner or of the material of the latter. His imitations of him and adaptations from him are, accordingly, far less than those which took place in the case of several inferior authors with whom he was, assuredly, no more familiar. The lines of the English poet that can be traced with certainty to the Italian are not many in number. Nor are they essential to the existence of the pieces in which they are contained. By the most liberal computation they cannot well be made to exceed a hundred. Indebtedness on this scale, when placed side by side with the obligations the poet is under to Boccaccio, or to the *Roman de la Rose*, shrinks fairly into insignificance.

There may have been other Italian works with which

[1] *Geschichte der Englischen Litteratur*, von Bernhard ten Brink. Zweiter Band, erste Hälfte, S. 111. (Berlin, 1889.)

Chaucer was acquainted besides those of the three great writers that have been mentioned. But so far nothing has been produced to establish positively the existence of any such knowledge. Tyrwhitt conjectured that the incident of Thales falling into a marl-pit, as told in the Miller's tale, might have been taken by Chaucer from the celebrated collection, called *Cento Novelle Antiche*, which preceded the 'Decameron.'[1] But it would be nothing but conjecture to refer to a particular source a story so common. With the three authors mentioned, we can therefore take leave of modern Italy, and go back to ancient. Here the statement comes in with peculiar weight, that the works which a student of the Middle Ages read were not always those which he would have most liked, but those which were most accessible. Consequently, in discussing the Latin authors with whom Chaucer displayed special familiarity, we are to bear in mind, as has already been observed, that it is not necessarily his tastes that are represented, but his opportunities. Nevertheless, the list of those with whose acquaintance he has been credited embraces no small number of eminent names. It is full as remarkable, however, for those it leaves out as for those it contains. It includes Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Juvenal, Persius, Statius, Lucan, Valerius Flaccus, Claudian, Cicero, Livy, Seneca, Suetonius, Valerius Maximus, Florus, Boethius, and Macrobius. Whether he was actually familiar with the writings of all of these, or with all the writings of any one of these, is a question that cannot be answered positively, in the present state of our knowledge. It

[1] Note on line 3457. The novel given is Number 36.

is enough to say, that with each one of them some acquaintance on his part has been implied in his own words, or has been imputed to him by his editors and commentators. How true this is, as well as to how great an extent it is true, is the matter that now lies before us to be determined.

Let us first take up those who are entirely or primarily poets. There are two great classic authors with whom not merely Chaucer's acquaintance, but also the intimacy of his acquaintance, cannot be disputed. These are Virgil and Ovid. The evidences are so numerous that the matter needs only cursory mention. He quotes both by name frequently. He borrows from both constantly. For Virgil, he felt that sentiment of veneration which was generally entertained for him by all the writers of the Middle Ages who had any appreciation of literature as literature. The first book of the 'House of Fame' is essentially a description of the plot of the Æneid. From the same work his account of Dido, in the 'Legend of Good Women,' is mainly taken, as he himself tells us in the following apostrophe to the poet, with which it opens:

> "Glory and honour, Virgil Mantuán,
> Be to thy name! and I shall, as I can,
> Follow thy lantern, as thou goest beforn."

But Chaucer's acquaintance with Virgil's writings does not seem to have extended beyond his great epic. In the specific mention which is made of him in the 'House of Fame,' he plays no other part than that of upholder of the name of Æneas. The English poet gives no certain sign, so far as I have observed, that he had so much as

heard of the 'Bucolics' or the 'Georgics.' Moreover, while his admiration for Virgil may have been greater than for Ovid, the latter seems to have been more of a companion. It is mainly from him that he derives his acquaintance with the stories of classic mythology. To enumerate the incidents, allusions, and illustrations that owe their origin to his writings would require of itself almost a special chapter. There is the less occasion for entering into these details because this work is now generally done in editions of the poet which are furnished with any annotations whatever. It is enough to say that the most conspicuous in single instances of Chaucer's indebtedness can be found in the account of Ceyx and Alcyone, as recorded in the 'Death of Blanche,' and in several of the stories—especially those of Thisbe, Hypsypile, Lucretia, Ariadne and Philomela—which are contained in the 'Legend of Good Women.' There is, perhaps, no reason to doubt the English poet's acquaintance with all the writings of the Latin poet, though it is a point that cannot be indisputably proved. The *Metamorphoses* is the work to which his obligations are greatest. Both the *Heroides* and the *Fasti*, however, are laid under frequent contribution. In the 'Death of Blanche,' the 'Remedy of Love' is mentioned.[1] There are phrases and passages also that involve a knowledge of the 'Art of Love,' and in the prologue to the tale of the Wife of Bath it is spoken of specifically.[2] Altogether, Ovid may be called the favorite author of Chaucer in respect to the extent to which the material taken from him was embodied in

[1] Line 568.

[2] Line 680.

productions of his own, written at long intervals of time apart, and upon subjects essentially different. At least, if there be any question on this point, the matter of indebtedness must lie between the Latin poet's writings and the *Roman de la Rose* so far as the latter is the work of Jean de Meung.

Statius is another author with whom Chaucer displays special familiarity. It is not always easy to pronounce upon the exact extent of his obligations, because it was upon the 'Thebaid' of this writer that Boccaccio founded in part his *Teseide*, which Chaucer adopted in turn as the basis of the Knight's tale. Accordingly, it cannot always be determined with certainty whether the indebtedness, that was assuredly due, was due in any given case directly to the Latin poet, or indirectly to him through the Italian. Thus, to take a simple illustration, the epithet 'armipotent,' applied to the gods, could have been taken either from Boccaccio or Statius, as it appears in both. Still, there is evidence enough to leave not a vestige of doubt that Statius was an author who was much read and admired by Chaucer. In the 'House of Fame' he makes a reference to his unfinished epic of the Achilleis.[1] From it, however, he seems to have taken nothing, unless the enrolling of Chiron among the musicians is to be credited to that source.[2] But incidents and events from the much better known epic of the 'Thebaid' he introduces frequently. The fact of his acquaintance with it is, indeed, noticeably asserted in 'Troilus and Cressida.' It

[1] Line 1463.
[2] See *House of Fame*, line 1206, and book i. of the *Achilleis*, lines 105–118.

is in the second canto of that poem that the heroine is represented as sitting with two other ladies "within a paved parlor," and listening to the reading by a maiden of this particular "gest of the siege of Thebes."[1] Even the very place at which the reading is cut short by the arrival of Pandarus is specifically fixed. It is the passage in which Amphiaraus is represented as swallowed up by the earth with his horses and chariot. This is the incident with which the seventh book concludes. Moreover, towards the end of 'Troilus and Cressida,' Cassandra gives her brother an outline of the story of the 'Thebaid.'[2] In the manuscripts, indeed, twelve Latin lines are inserted, in which the arguments of the twelve books of that epic are briefly stated. This same poem, also, has been drawn upon in 'Anelida and Arcite' and in the Knight's tale. In both cases the manuscripts—or some of them—again introduce a quotation of several lines from the twelfth book of the 'Thebaid.' The story told by Statius, also, of the bracelet that invariably brought woe to its possessor—the *dirum monile* of Harmonia[3]—appears in the 'Complaint of Mars,' where it is spoken of as "the brooch of Thebes."

To the single extant work of Lucan—the 'Pharsalia'—there are two references in the 'Canterbury Tales.' Its author is twice mentioned also in two other places, in one of which he is styled "the great poet, Dan Lucan." There can consequently be hardly any reasonable ground for distrusting Chaucer's actual acquaintance with this production. Yet it is certain that the most specific reference he makes to it would lead to the

[1] Book ii., lines 81–108. [2] Book v., lines 1485–1510. [3] *Thebaid*, ii., 266.

conclusion that he knew about it rather than knew it. In the Man of Law's tale he describes the magnificence of the retinues that went to escort and came to meet the daughter of the Roman emperor on her journey to marry the Sultan. Upon it he makes this comment:

> " Nought trow I the triumph of Julius,
> Of which that Lucan maketh such a boast,
> Was royaller or morè curious
> Than was the assembly of this blissful host."[1]

As a matter of fact, while the military operations and successes of Cæsar are described in this epic, there is no actual triumph—for the word is clearly used here in its specific Roman sense—which Lucan represents him as having received. If the reference, therefore, means anything, it must be to the passage in the third book of the 'Pharsalia' in which the republican poet described how glorious the triumph of Cæsar would have been had his conquests been limited to the enemies of Rome, had he come laden with the spoils of the Rhine and of the Ocean, and with captive Gauls and Britons following his conquering car. Two of the other references of Chaucer to the Roman author are more general, but they evince full acquaintance with the fact that the 'Pharsalia' is as much taken up with the fortunes of Pompey as of Cæsar. They are to be found in the Monk's tale and in the 'House of Fame.'[2]

We come now to that writer of the closing years of the fourth century who ends the list of the Latin classic poets. Claudian is twice mentioned in the 'House

[1] Lines 302–305.

[2] Lines 729 and 1499 respectively.

of Fame,' and once in the Merchant's tale. In all these instances the reference is to his unfinished epic entitled *De Raptu Proserpinæ.* It is evident that this poem is the one which had made the deepest impression upon the mind of Chaucer. The subject, besides, is the same that had attracted him in the writings of Virgil and Dante. In the 'House of Fame' Claudian appears as one of the poets whose images occupy a place in the palace of the goddess, and his claim to the distinction is, that he has told the story of the infernal world. He follows Lucan, and is described in the following lines:

> "And next him on a pillar stood
> Of sulphur, like as he were wood,[1]
> Dan Claudian, the sooth to tell,
> That bare up all the fame of hell,
> Of Pluto and of Proserpine,
> That queen is of the darkè pine."[2] 1507–1512.

"Like as he were wood" is an expression which, common as it is in Chaucer, may be thought to show here his appreciation of the fervor, and fire, and rhetorical diction which modern critics have regarded as special characteristics of Claudian's style. On the other hand, it is possible that he may have had in mind the fierce invectives against Eutropius and Rufinus. There are, perhaps, not many passages which can be traced directly to this poet. There is, more often, a general resemblance in the ideas and spirit than a transferrence of the lines. The characteristics, for instance, by which the trees are described in the second book of Claudian's

[1] Mad.

[2] Punishment; place of punishment.

epic agree in many particulars with those contained in the 'Parliament of Fowls.' In the Latin poet, the fir is suitable for the sea, the cypress shades the dead, the laurel divines the future, and the vine encircles the elm.[1] These correspond to what is said of the same objects in the English poet. But, while coincidences of this kind can hardly be called accidental, it is easy to base upon them unfounded assumptions. Passages about trees of a similar character, though not with resemblances so pronounced, can be found in Statius[2] and Boccaccio[3] as well as other authors with whom Chaucer was familiar. A somewhat long list of these, with the uses to which they are applied, appears in Ovid. There are shorter ones in Lucan and Seneca. It was to the first of these three last-named authors that this method of describing them owes its origin. When once the general idea had been given, the extension of its application was inevitable. They were, in all probability, favorite passages, and all alike well known to the poet. Nothing more is meant to be implied here than that, on the whole, Chaucer's description of trees comes nearest to that contained in Claudian.

This poem of the 'Parliament of Fowls' contains, moreover, one verse which is essentially little more than a translation of a passage of Claudian. It exhibits Chaucer's familiarity with a production which otherwise we should have no reason for suspecting. This is the description of the dreamer, repeating in his sleep

[1] *De Raptu Proserpinæ*, ii., 107–111.

[2] Statius, *Thebaid*, vi., 98–106.

[3] Boccaccio, *Teseide*, xi., stanzas 22–24, inclusive. Boccaccio follows Statius closely.

the ideas and desires which had occupied him in his waking hours. It is in this way the lines run:

"The weary hunter, sleeping in his bed,
To wood again his mindè goeth anon;
The judgè dreameth how his pleas be sped;
The carter dreameth how his cartès gon;
The rich of gold; the knight fight[1] with his fon;[2]
The sickè met[3] he dreameth of the tun;
The lover met[3] he hath his lady won."

These lines are a free translation of the beginning of the preface to Claudian's panegyric on the sixth consulship of the Emperor Honorius.[4] In addition to these places, in the original prologue to the 'Legend of Good Women' this same poet is mentioned, in conjunction with Valerius Maximus and Livy, as having paid high tribute to the excellences possessed and displayed by women. The production Chaucer most probably had in view was the panegyric upon the wife of Stilicho, which is entitled *Laus Serenæ*. In the course of it, Claudian celebrates her superiority to the heroines of ancient story. There are a good many female characters introduced for various reasons; and among them are to be found not only the familiar Alcestis and Lucretia,

[1] Fights. [2] Foes. [3] Dreams.

[4] "Omnia quæ sensu volvuntur vota diurno
Pectore sopito reddit amica quies.
Venator defessa toro cum membra reponit,
Mens tamen ad sylvas et sua lustra reddit.
Judicibus lites, aurigæ somnia currus,
Vanaque nocturnis meta cavetur equis.
Furto gaudet amans, permutat navita merces,
Et vigil elapsas quærit avarus opes.
Blandaque largitur frustra sitientibus ægris
Irriguus gelido pocula fonte sopor."

but the less frequently cited Penelope, Laodamia, and Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi.

These five writers that have just been described are, unquestionably, the Latin poets with whom Chaucer was most familiar. Not only do his writings bear witness to this fact, but they are the ones selected by him as the representative authors whose images stand on pillars in the 'House of Fame.' That would not, of itself, indicate acquaintance with their works on his part, for in this method of recognizing their merit he unites with them Homer and Josephus. These two latter he must necessarily have assigned to their places on the strength of their general reputation at the time, and not on that of any personal knowledge of their writings, at least in the original. But while the proof of his acquaintance with them rests upon the evidence of his works, the particular mention he makes of them in the 'House of Fame' shows that they occupied no mean position in his estimation. With the exception of Claudian, they are all likewise introduced in 'Troilus and Cressida,' and again in terms of highest respect. In the apostrophe to his own poetry with which the work concludes, he appeals to it not to envy the achievement of others, but, as he expresses it, directs that it

> "Subject be to allè poesy,
> And kiss the steps, whereas thou seest space,
> Of Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, Stace."

It is to be observed that all the Latin poets so far mentioned have been, with the exception of Ovid, the writers of epics. There is still another author of this

class whom Chaucer is credited with knowing, or at least with knowing about. This is Valerius Flaccus, who belongs to the first century. He wrote an heroic poem on the Argonautic expedition which was based primarily upon a similar Greek one of Apollonius Rhodius. The production was either left by him unfinished, or has not been handed down in its entirety. The eighth book in the work as extant breaks off abruptly in the midst of a speech. Chaucer makes a reference, or supposed reference, to this epic in the 'Legend of Good Women.' In speaking of those who became the companions of Jason, he says,

> "Whoso asketh who is with him gone,
> Let him go readen Argonauticon,
> For he will tell a talè long enow." 1456–1458.

This is the poet's single and not altogether respectful mention of the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus, if we assume that it was the work which he had in mind. Here, however, a vexed question at once presents itself. It has been, and continues still to be, the common statement that this particular production remained unknown to the Middle Ages, and was first brought to the notice of the modern world by the famous Florentine scholar Poggio Bracciolini. While attending the Council of Constance, he discovered in the monastery of St. Gall a manuscript that contained about one half of the poem as it now exists. This was in 1416, more than thirty years after Chaucer had made his supposed mention of the *Argonautica* which has just been cited. Either, therefore, the ordinary statements about the knowledge

of this epic possessed by the Middle Ages are incorrect, or it must be some altogether different production of which the English poet was speaking. None other, however, upon this subject is known to exist. There was, indeed, in ancient times a Latin translation or adaptation of the work of Apollonius Rhodius made by Varro.[1] To it Ovid makes several references. But he never mentions the poem by its title, so that it would have been impossible for Chaucer to learn its name from that source, and the poem itself had undoubtedly disappeared centuries before his day.[2]

On the strength of two quotations we may assert that Chaucer was acquainted with Juvenal. One of these is in the tale of the Wife of Bath,[3] and the other in 'Troilus and Cressida.'[4] In both cases the Latin poet is specifically mentioned as the author of the sentiment expressed. In both cases, too, the quotation is from his tenth satire. It may or may not be of any importance to add that the name Arviragus, who appears as one of the characters in the Franklin's tale, is also to be found in the fourth satire. The quotation in the Wife of Bath's tale about the ability of the empty-handed traveller to sing merrily in the presence of robbers must early have become the well-known saying it still remains. The wide currency it had attained is made evident by the

[1] Publius Terentius Varro Atacinus.

[2] Probably the best explanation of this supposed reference to the work of Valerius Flaccus can be found in the concluding sentence of the first chapter of the history of Dares Phrygius. This reads as follows (ed. Meister): "Demonstrare eos qui cum Jasone profecti sunt non videtur nostrum esse; sed qui volunt eos cognoscere, Argonautas legant." This passage, which Chaucer seems certainly to have had in mind in the lines just quoted, was pointed out by Bech in *Anglia*, vol. v., pp. 325, 326.

[3] Line 336.

[4] Book iv., 197.

fact that it is quoted by Boethius in his 'Consolation of Philosophy' without any reference to its author.[1] Yet it is fair to assume that with the writings of Juvenal Chaucer was familiar, or, at any rate, with part of them. It is quite different, however, when we come to Horace. There has been, and still continues to be, a prevalent disposition to regard that poet as one with whose writings he was well acquainted. To me the weight of evidence seems to lean in a precisely contrary direction. There are only three instances, so far as I am aware, in which there has been any attempt to trace specific passages to this author. One of these is at the beginning of the Manciple's tale. It is a reference to the story of Amphion walling the city of Thebes by the agency of music. The others are found in three consecutive stanzas in the 'Troilus and Cressida,'[2] in which Pandarus advises the hero of the poem that in writing his letter he should be careful not to repeat the same thing too often, even if it be a good thing. Nor, again, was he to jumble discordant things together, as to use, for instance, terms of physic in a discourse about love. In the one case, he points his objection by stating the weariness that would overtake men if a harper, even the best one alive, should persist in playing upon one string only. In the other case, he shows the ridicule that would befall a painter were he to represent a pike with the feet of an ass and the head of an ape. These imitations, real or supposed, are taken in every case, if taken at all, from the epistle to the Pisos on the 'Poetic Art;' so that if we concede them to be unquestionable imitations, they would prove

[1] Book ii., prose 5.

[2] ii., 1028–1043.

the existence of no further acquaintance with the Roman author than would be implied in the knowledge of that particular production. But they are far from being undoubted imitations. It is not necessary to assume, in the first place, that Chaucer was obliged to go to Horace for the story of Amphion. Without speaking of other ancient sources, more than one reference occurs in Statius to the legend of the Theban walls rising to the sound of music. It is told, moreover, in full in the account of Amphion given by Boccaccio in his *De Genealogia Deorum Gentilium*,[1] a work with which, as has been mentioned, there is every reason to assume the English poet's acquaintance. The second asserted imitation is one of those comparisons that are too inevitable in their nature to warrant the drawing of inferences of any sort. The third bears certainly a resemblance to the opening lines of the treatise on the 'Poetic Art,' in which Horace speaks of the laughter that would greet the painter who joined to a human head the neck of a horse and added feathers to limbs taken from all sorts of animals. But this striking illustration early became, without much doubt, a current commonplace upon the subject of poetical composition. It could have been, and probably was, well known to many who may never have read or perhaps heard of its author. Such as it is, however, it is the strongest piece of evidence that has as yet been brought forward to prove the possession of any acquaintance whatever on the part of Chaucer with this particular production; for while the objects selected for comparison vary, the ideas are essentially the same.

[1] Lib. v., cap. 30.

On the other hand, there is a good deal to give the impression that the Roman writer was one whom the English writer neither knew nor knew about. In all the works of Chaucer not a single line can be found in which the name of Horace occurs. Not a single line can be found in which there is even a remote allusion to him personally. If this fact prove nothing more, it precludes at once the idea that the Roman poet could have been in any sense of the word a favorite of the English poet. Had that been the case, we are too well acquainted with both the proclivities and practices of the latter to doubt that far more than one tribute of respect and admiration would have been paid by him to his predecessor. It is safe to go further than this. If Horace were an author whom Chaucer had been enabled to know at all, it is almost an impossibility that he should not have been one whom he would have known well. Between the intellectual and moral characteristics of the two men there was in many ways a close resemblance. In certain respects, too, their poetic gifts bore a good deal of likeness. Like Horace, Chaucer was a man of the world as distinguished from a mere recluse. Like him, too, he was disposed to make the best of the world as it was, not because it was one that suited him especially, but because it was the only one that it was granted to him to know at all. In the writings of both there is found the same delicate satire, in which there is no display of bitterness; the same strength and manliness, through which runs the same vein of tenderness. There is the same delight in nature, the same exquisite bonhomie, the same unrepining acceptance of the evils of

life as man's inevitable lot, the same joy in its pleasures as something to be welcomed and not to be shunned. If spiritual and intellectual affinities count for anything, we may feel reasonably confident that had the writings of Horace been known to Chaucer the fact would have been blazoned on many a page.

No one can well maintain, however, that on this point any certain conclusions can be reached beyond the fact that the Latin poet was not an author with whom the English poet was intimately acquainted. Whatever opinion we may entertain upon the further question whether he was acquainted with him at all, there is another Roman satirist of whom, on the strength of one line at least, Chaucer must be conceded to have known something. In the prologue to his tale, the Franklin, in apologizing for what he terms his "rude speech," gives as an excuse,

"I slep[1] never on the mount of Parnasso."

Here two of the best manuscripts come to our help with a quotation from Persius on their margins. It consists of the opening lines of the short prologue with which he introduces his satires.[2] "Neither remember I," says the Roman writer, "of moistening my lips in Hippocrene, nor of having slept on the double-headed Parnassus, that thus suddenly I should come forth a poet." The evidence of the manuscripts is convincing that Chaucer had these words in mind. It at least indicates that he

[1] Slept.

[2] "Nec fonte labra prolui caballino,
Neque in bicipiti somniasse Parnasso
Memini, ut repente sic poeta prodirem."

had read as much of Persius as is contained in the prologue to the satires. With the satires themselves he may likewise have been perfectly familiar. It is certain that Persius was a popular author during the Middle Ages. He was largely studied in schools. Manuscripts of his writings must therefore have been fairly accessible. It may, accordingly, seem to be straining a point to hint, even hesitatingly, a doubt of the English poet's full knowledge of all the very little the Latin poet produced. Yet it must be confessed that Chaucer's quotations from writers exhibit a familiarity with prologues and first books and early chapters which contrasts ominously with the comparative infrequency with which he makes citations from the middle and latter parts of most of the works he mentions. The suspicions that arise in consequence may be unjust to the one of whom they are entertained. They may be deemed to display an unworthy and grovelling spirit on the part of him who entertains them; but, constituted as fallen human nature is, they are liable at times to thrust their offensive presence before the eyes of the most ardent admirer.

So much for the poets. The prose-writers whom Chaucer mentions—including in the list all that by any stretch of language can be called classical—are Cicero, Livy, Valerius Maximus, Suetonius, Seneca, Boethius, and Macrobius. Only two of them belong to the very first rank, and these are assuredly not the two with whom he was especially familiar. The latest of them all, in point of time, is the one to whom he was under the greatest of obligations. In this respect he did little more than reflect the feelings of his age. Boethius,

among the Latin prose-writers, was to Chaucer, indeed, what Ovid was among the poets. As in the case of the one, so in that of the other, we are embarrassed by the abundance of material that exists to establish the intimacy of the acquaintance he possessed. The nature of this work involves so many references to Boethius, however, that it is only necessary to make but brief mention of him in this place. His treatise *De Musica* is alluded to in the tale of the Nun's Priest, when the fox, in describing the various abilities of the cock, remarks,

> "Therwith he had in music more feeling
> Than had Boece or any that can sing."

But the work by which this last of the philosophers was really known to the men of the Middle Ages was the treatise *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, which he composed in prison shortly before his execution, in the year 525. Chaucer shared fully in the interest, and even enthusiastic admiration, which for centuries this work inspired. It led him to produce a translation of it, that he himself seems to have held in a good deal of estimation. It is one of the two books against the incorrect transcription of which he launches his invective in his address to his scribe. He mentions it also in the 'Legend of Good Women.' In the so-called Retractation—whether his or not—at the end of the 'Canterbury Tales,' it heads the list of productions, of the composition of which he does not repent. Not satisfied with turning the whole work into prose, he versified passages from it, and introduced them into his other productions, in some instances not at all to their improvement. But numberless quotations

from it, or references to it or to its author, are scattered through his various pieces. It is somewhat singular, indeed, that he, a poet, did not in his regular translation turn the metres of Boethius into verse. To a slight extent he made up for the omission. In the third book of the 'Troilus and Cressida' the eighth metre of the second book of the 'Consolation of Philosophy' is made the basis of a song of Troilus;[1] and the poem entitled the 'Former Age' is largely founded upon the fifth metre of the same book.

With the writings of another philosopher, or at any rate with his name, Chaucer displays considerable familiarity. This was Seneca. An account of his tutorship of the Emperor Nero is given in the Monk's tale, as well as the circumstances of his death. The remark is there made that he was the flower of morality "as in his time." This statement accurately represents the sentiments of the men of the Middle Ages. To them Seneca was one of the best known, and by them he was one of the most highly esteemed of Latin authors. It was hardly possible for any one who was interested in literature at all not to have some acquaintance with his writings. It is not a surprising fact, therefore, that he should be mentioned by Chaucer, though it may be somewhat surprising that he should be mentioned so often. Besides the account given of him in the Monk's tale, his name occurs nine times in the writings of the English poet. In every instance but one, he appears as an authority for some sentiment. No author, indeed, with the exception of Ovid, is specifically quoted by

[1] Lines 1744–1771.

Chaucer with so much frequency, though to several he is under far greater obligations. It is to be added, also, that all the references to him occur in the 'Canterbury Tales.' Outside of that work the name of Seneca does not appear, and it is doubtful if a single passage in the other poems can be traced to him with any certainty. The sentiment, for illustration, that life is short and art is long, with which the 'Parliament of Fowls' opens, is found in the first chapter of the treatise *De Brevitate Vitæ;* but Chaucer's knowledge of an aphorism so common and so ancient as this it would scarcely be fair to impute to any particular source.

In truth, though Seneca is mentioned so often, there is no such evidence of intimate familiarity on the poet's part with his writings as exists in the case of several other authors. Observations purporting to be taken from him are introduced with his name, as if to indicate that his very words had been quoted. But this seems rarely to have been the case. It is the general idea that is taken rather than any precise utterance. In the prologue to the Man of Law's tale, for instance, the loss of time is lamented. Seneca is cited as an authority for the assertion of its unlikeness to possessions in the fact that when once gone, it can never be recovered. It would be hard, and perhaps impossible, to find a passage in his writings where an exact statement to this effect appears. Still, it is an idea that could easily have been gathered from several. The subject, indeed, is one upon which the Roman philosopher had much to say. He wrote a work on the brevity of life. His first epistle is taken up with remarks upon the value and

use of time, and his forty-ninth upon the shortness and swiftness of it. But it is the general tenor of what he says which the poet apparently had in view, rather than some special words. The assertion just quoted had, indeed, become a commonplace. Chaucer has the same reflection elsewhere, and Gower also repeats it.[1] A similar statement may be made of the remark upon the honorableness of contented poverty which is ascribed to this author by the Wife of Bath.[2] The sentiment is undoubtedly a noble one, though none are apt to be so fervent in the expression of it as those who are rich. Still, it is one with which a philosopher might well content himself in adversity. It is therefore not surprising that it occupies a conspicuous place in the consolatory treatise to his mother Helvia which Seneca wrote during his Corsican exile. But it is expressed by him even more frequently and more unctuously in later works—such as the one on the 'Happy Life'—while the author was accumulating his fortune of three hundred million sesterces. Yet, as in the previous instance, the precise words quoted would be hard to find. The same observation is true of the further sentiment, for which in the same tale the philosopher is made responsible, that gentility consists in gentle deeds;[3] and again, of the one contained in the Manciple's tale, upon the effect of idle gossip and tale-bearing in severing friendship.[4]

It can hardly be maintained that these references furnish indisputable proof of Chaucer's familiarity with

[1] Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, vol. ii., p. 51 (Pauli's edition).
[2] *Wife of Bath's tale*, line 328.
[3] *Wife of Bath's tale*, line 314.
[4] Line 241.

Seneca at first hand. In several of them, other writers are joined with him as authorities. The appearance of these remarks in the poet's writings would be perfectly consonant with the assumption that he had a general impression of the nature of the philosopher's teaching, without having made an actual perusal of the works in which they are contained. Seneca, as has been remarked, was a favorite author of the Middle Ages. His observations and maxims for the conduct of life must have been heard and repeated by many men who had not the ability, and perhaps not the desire, to search his writings for the counsels they admired and the moral lessons by which they may have been guided. On the other hand, there are instances in which Chaucer's direct acquaintance with him appears either as highly probable or as actually certain. One of these is the warning found in the Merchant's tale as to the care that should be exercised in the choice of those to whom we make gifts of land and property.[1] Seneca is cited as the authority for it. It is, without question, a point upon which he insists strongly in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of his treatise *De Beneficiis*. Tyrwhitt also traced the origin of the comparison in the Pardoner's tale, in which a drunken man is likened to a madman, to a passage in the eighty-third epistle.[2] Gower, it may be added, makes a similar observation.[3] But the Summoner's tale contains the clearest evidence of Chaucer's actual perusal of the philosopher's works.[4] Three of the illustrative anecdotes given

[1] Lines 279–281.
[2] Lines 30–36.
[3] *Confessio Amantis*, iii., p. 20 (Pauli).
[4] Lines 312–384.

in it are taken directly from the treatise *De Ira*. From the sixteenth chapter of the first book of that production comes the story of the judge who sentenced three innocent men to death. From the fourteenth chapter of the third book comes the story of Cambyses, who, to prove the steadiness of his hand and eye, shot before the face of his father the son of Prexaspes, who had admonished him to drink less wine. From the twenty-first chapter of the same book is derived the account of Cyrus diverting into numberless rills the river Gyndes, or Gysen, as it is called by Chaucer. In the Merchant's tale, Seneca is also quoted as saying that nothing is better than a humble wife.[1] Two of the best manuscripts have in the margin the passage in the original Latin[2] to which the reference is made. If it occur in his writings, it has escaped my observation. Chaucer pretty certainly did not find it there for himself. He seems to have derived it from Albertano of Brescia.[3]

The Franklin, in the prologue to his tale, has been quoted as saying, in the words of Persius, that he never slept on Mount Parnassus. To this he added that he

> "Ne lered[4] never Marcus Tullius Cicero."

Chaucer was unquestionably better acquainted with Mount Parnassus than his Franklin; and he, doubtless, had learned a great deal more about Cicero. Yet it is not certain that he learned what would be considered much in itself. Except in connection with the 'Dream

[1] Line 132.

[2] The marginal Latin reading is as follows: "Sicut nihil est superius benigna conjuge, ita nihil est crudelius infesta muliere."

[3] See Koeppel, in *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Litteraturen*, vol. 86, p. 39.

[4] Learned.

of Scipio'—consideration of which will be deferred till Macrobius is reached—there are only two references made to the great Roman writer by name. One of these is found in the lines just quoted. The other is in the epistle to Scogan, in which the poet tells his friend to think on Tullius's kindness. What is the precise meaning that should be given to this injunction it is perhaps impossible to explain. It may be an allusion to some incident in Cicero's career. Again, it may be a passage in his writings with which, for some reason, the two men were specially familiar. By many it has been thought to refer to the treatise *De Amicitia*. Be this as it may, or what it may, there is no reason to question Chaucer's acquaintance with the treatise *De Divinatione*. The subjects it discussed were those that interested him specially. From it he took two of the stories about dreams that are contained in the tale of the Nun's Priest. He does not, to be sure, give the name of the work, or even the name of its writer, but he specifically describes him as "one of the greatest authors that men read." These two stories occur in the twenty-seventh chapter of the first book of the treatise just mentioned. The inference is unavoidable that Chaucer had read them there himself, because he takes the pains to assert that the second story occurs immediately after the first. As a matter of fact, he has reversed the order of their appearance in the original. In this, it is his second tale that is there told first. No weight, however, can be attached to a variation of this sort, natural enough in the case of one who had no manuscript at hand to verify or correct the incidents he

was repeating from memory. But the changes which Cicero's first anecdote, in particular, underwent show, as Tyrwhitt pointed out, the perfect freedom that the poet exhibited in the use of the material he borrowed. The differences between the two accounts of the same transaction are sufficient to render the one barely recognizable as having been taken from the other. Nothing but the poet's own declaration could establish the matter beyond question. In Cicero, the story is told of Simonides. He had found the corpse of a stranger unburied, and took the pains to inter it with proper rites. As he was about to embark upon a voyage, the dead man appeared to him in a dream and warned him not to go. If he did, he would assuredly perish. Simonides heeded this somewhat shadowy injunction, gave up his intention, and the vessel in which he had purposed to sail went down with all on board. Cicero's second story, as it appears in Chaucer, is much closer to the original. Yet even in this instance the details are given with much greater fulness, and the incidents are much more dramatically told.

Cicero introduces these two tales with the statement that they were made the subject of constant narration by the Stoics. It is evident from his words that they were perfectly well known in his time. They are likewise found in another author with whom Chaucer was acquainted. Both of them are related in essentially the same way by Valerius Maximus in his work entitled *De Factis Dictisque Memorabilibus*. He was a writer of the first century. The production by which he is now known is essentially a compilation of anecdotes, mainly

historical. They are in nine books. The two stories mentioned are to be found in the first book, and in its seventh chapter, which treats of dreams. With that peculiar perversity that seems to affect the reasoning powers whenever any question connected with Chaucer arises, Warton, in his 'History of English Poetry,' took the pains to inform us that these two tales were not taken by Chaucer from Cicero, but from Valerius Maximus. He asserted the fact positively, but wisely made no effort to prove it. There was no evidence in favor of its truth, and what little evidence of any kind exists at all indicates its falsity. Chaucer himself, as has been mentioned, informs us definitely that these stories about dreams were related by one of the greatest authors that men read. This was what Cicero assuredly was. It was what Valerius Maximus just as assuredly was not. He informs us, moreover, that the two tales follow one another directly in his original. This they do in Cicero; this they do not do in Valerius Maximus. In the work of the latter they are separated by several anecdotes of a similar character.

At the same time, it is not impossible that the poet may have read the accounts in both authors. With the compilation of the inferior writer he was indisputably acquainted. Three times only, indeed, does he mention his name. Once it occurs in the account of Julius Cæsar contained in the Monk's tale. There he is joined with Lucan and Suetonius as an authority for the life of the dictator. This he cannot be called with any propriety, though his work contains several anecdotes of him which express the greatest possible admiration,

and what some would consider the grossest possible adulation. In particular, he tells of his covering with his toga the lower part of his person, as he fell beneath the daggers of the assassins.[1] The same incident is recorded by Suetonius. From either of these authors it could have been taken by Chaucer. But Valerius Maximus seems to have been much better known to the Wife of Bath than to the Monk. He is specifically quoted by her as the authority for the statement about the rise of Tullus Hostilius from poverty to high position.[2] But there are additional incidents taken by her from his writings, though his name is not mentioned. In the prologue to her tale, she expresses her feelings very forcibly about "Metellius, the foul churl, the swine," who killed his wife with a club because she had been drinking.[3] The anecdote is recorded in the sixth book of Valerius Maximus. It is found in the third chapter, which treats of severity. From the same chapter, also, two further illustrations are taken by her of the exercise of marital austerity on an aggravated scale.[4] They belong to the "old Roman gests" with which the clerk of Oxford, the fifth husband of the Wife of Bath, was in the habit of regaling his refractory spouse. It was perhaps his companionship that made her, in the extent of her literary acquirements, a worthy rival of the cock in the tale of the Nun's Priest. One of these two stories related by her was told by Valerius Maximus of Sulpicius Gallus, who repudiated his wife because he

[1] Lib. iv., cap. 5.
[2] Lib. iii., cap. 4. *Wife of Bath's tale*, l. 309.
[3] Lines 460–462.
[4] Lines 642–649.

had seen her go out of doors with her head bare. The other he tells of Sempronius Sophus, who took the same course with his wife because she had ventured to visit the games without his knowledge.

In the original form of the prologue to the 'Legend of Good Women,' Valerius Maximus is once more mentioned.[1] He is there joined with Livy, Claudian, and St. Jerome, as having borne witness to the noble lives that have been lived by women, and the noble deeds they have done. These are the only instances in which reference is made to him by Chaucer, or to his writings. Warton asserts that he was an author who was much more of a favorite with the men of the Middle Ages than Cicero.[2] Every age is always profoundly impressed with the superior excellence of its own literary judgment, and this particular historian of English poetry always leaves upon the mind the impression that it was his profound conviction that no century had ever been so distinguished for its refined and chastened taste as the eighteenth. This would have been well enough, had he not seemed to feel it a duty to depreciate most unfairly the taste of previous periods. If Valerius Maximus was more read in the Middle Ages than Cicero, he was assuredly not more esteemed. One piece, or rather fragment, of the latter author there was which was then looked upon with as much admiration as it has ever been regarded since, if not indeed with a good deal more. This was entitled the 'Dream of Scipio.' It was a special favorite of Chaucer. He has several references to it. In the 'Parliament of Fowls' he gives a poeti-

[1] Line 280.

[2] *History of English Poetry*, sec. xvi.

cal abstract of its contents. The 'Dream' itself formed part of the treatise of Cicero *De Republica*. This work, though in existence during the tenth century and perhaps later, had disappeared at the time of the revival of letters. In the latter half of the thirteenth century, Roger Bacon tells us that he had sought for it diligently in various parts of the world, but had been unable to find it anywhere.[1] But in the library of the Vatican, Angelo Mai discovered a palimpsest manuscript from which it had been obliterated to make room for a commentary of St. Augustine on the Psalms. From this source he was enabled to restore about one third of the original. The portion recovered was published in 1822. It did not, however, include anything from the sixth book in which the 'Dream of Scipio' occurs.

Fortunately, this particular episode had been preserved entire by the fact that a writer named Macrobius, who flourished about the beginning of the fifth century, had taken it as the text for a work of his own. This was entitled *Commentarius ex Cicerone in Somnium Scipionis*. It consists, primarily, of a series of essays upon the physical constitution of the universe, based necessarily upon the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. But in it the philosophical views of the Neo-Platonists were largely embodied and expounded. It laid down specifically the doctrine that nothing dies and nothing is destroyed, and this, of course, involves as a result the maintenance of the belief in the perpetuity of the world and in the immortality of the soul. The sentences of Cicero formed a sort of text at the head of each chapter,

[1] Rogeri Baconis *Opus Tertium*, p. 56 (London, 1859).

which was devoted to the explanation of the esoteric meaning of its heading. The manuscripts of the commentary naturally carried with them the matter upon which comment was made. In this way the 'Dream of Scipio' came to be widely known and studied during the Middle Ages. It itself was based largely upon passages in Plato, especially upon the story told of Er the Pamphylian, with which the treatise upon the 'Republic' ends. As it embodied in eloquent words the most advanced views of antiquity in regard to the future life, it deservedly became to the men of later times one of the most popular pieces that antiquity itself had produced and handed down. Chaucer appears to have had about the same feeling in regard to the comparative value of text and commentary which later men of genius have been supposed to feel and have occasionally been known to express. He may have read often the work of Macrobius. This had, indeed, much to say on astronomy, a subject in which he was deeply interested. But it is quite clear that the nine brief chapters which make up the *Somnium Scipionis*[1] were of more value and interest in his eyes than the two books that constitute its commentary. With the exception of some remarks upon the different kinds of dreams, I cannot find that he derived from Macrobius any material which he cared to embody in his own works.

We come now to the two historical writers that the poet mentions. These are Livy and Suetonius. Was he acquainted with the works of either, or of both? An

[1] Chaucer, in the *Parliament of Fowls* (line 32), says there are seven chapters.

affirmative answer is usually given, and perhaps justly. Warton, indeed, goes so far as to assert that Chaucer is fond of quoting the great Roman historian.[1] As he never names him but five times, and then always in connection with the stories of Lucrece and Virginia, this must be considered as stating the matter rather strongly. It is fair to add, however, that in the 'House of Fame' there is an author mentioned called Titus, who appears in the same line with Dares Phrygius, as one of the narrators of the story of the Trojan war. Titus Livius may have been meant; but it is now the almost universally accepted view that Dictys Cretensis is the writer to whom the reference is made. Still, there has never been much disposition to deny Chaucer's full acquaintance with the great historian. "It seems almost incredible," we have been told, "that a man of Chaucer's erudition should not have known in the original an author so much read in the Middle Ages, and whose works were to be found in the library of every considerable abbey of the country."[2] We certainly are in no position to make a positive assertion on the point, either one way or the other. Yet it is safe to say that the weight of evidence that can be collected from the poet's own writings is in favor of the conclusion that the incredible, as is not so very unusual, is the thing that in this case is worthy of belief.

Chaucer's mention of Livy, as has been remarked, is always in connection with the stories of Lucrece and of Virginia. These, it may be thought, are enough of them-

[1] Note to sec. xiv. of the *History of English Poetry*.

[2] Bell's *Chaucer*, vol. iii., p. 56, preface to the *Doctor's tale*.

selves to show his familiarity with that author. Unfortunately, it is his very account of them both that renders it liable to suspicion. The earliest instance of any direct reference to either is in the 'Death of Blanche.' In it he speaks of the "noble wife, Lucrece." She it was, according to his account, whom the "Roman Titus Livius" declared to be the best of women. The assertion may be true; but it is not made by the person to whom it is imputed. It is a point upon which Livy refrains from committing himself. The historian, again, is one of the two authorities from whom he professes to have taken the story of this same Roman matron, as it is found in the 'Legend of Good Women.'[1] He will refrain, he tells us, from relating the expulsion of the kings from Rome on account of the horrible acts of the tyrant Tarquin,

> "As saith Ovid and Titus Livius."

But he does give an account of the wrong done to Lucrece and of her voluntary death. Towards the conclusion of the narrative he introduces the historian a second time as the authority he had followed. Thus, he writes,

> "Endeth Lucresse,
> The noble wife, as Titus beareth witness."

With all this parade of indebtedness to Livy, there is nothing contained in the poem that could not have been told without his help. The story of Lucrece in

[1] In line 1721, which reads, "And softe wool our book saith that she wrought," in place of "our book," found in all the manuscripts, the early editions read 'Livy.' "Our book" means 'Ovid.'

the 'Legend of Good Women' is little more than a loose paraphrase of the story as told by Ovid in the second book of the *Fasti*.[1] There is not an incident in it that does not owe its origin to the Roman poet. The very few details of any sort that cannot be traced to him are not only of an exceedingly trivial nature, but they are of that well-known and even notorious character which renders it unnecessary to look for the poet's knowledge of them in any particular author.[2]

The story of Virginia forms the subject of the tale of the Doctor of Physic. It is from Livy that the account purports to be taken. The very opening line, at least, mentions him specifically as telling who and what the father of the heroine was. It would seem that hardly any better proof of his acquaintance with the historian could be offered. Closer examination, however, shows that in this very introductory passage Chaucer is not quoting him as an authority, but quoting his name from other authorities. In fact, the tale of Virginia, as told by the physician, is evidence, so far as it is evidence at all, that the poet knew nothing of Livy. It is, at any rate, the strongest kind of circumstantial evidence that he knew nothing whatever of that historian's account of the events that led to the fall of the decemvirate. The story of Virginia, as it appears in the 'Canterbury Tales,' is simply an expansion of the same story as found in the *Roman de la Rose*. From it is taken even its first line,

[1] Lines 741 ff.

[2] For a different view of Chaucer's indebtedness to Livy in the story of Lucrece, see Bech's article in *Anglia*, vol. v., pp. 333–335.

which contains the mention of Titus Livius.[1] In the French poem it occupies seventy lines; in the English one it extends to nearly three hundred. There are, accordingly, many circumstances and details in the latter that are not found in the former. But they are merely accessories; they are not in the least necessary to the orderly development of the incidents. The story, as told in the 'Romance of the Rose,' does not display too intimate familiarity with the particular account which it professes to follow. But Chaucer's expansion of it makes its unlikeness to the remote Latin original so marked that it is hardly conceivable that he could have been acquainted with the latter. Nor are the variations improvements. Least of all are they so from the poetic point of view, the one which a man of genius would be certain to take, if permitted. The story told by Livy is not merely affecting; it is in entire keeping with human nature, and therefore with the demands of art. The excited father, seeing no hope of saving his daughter from dishonor, nor of warding off the shame that overhangs his house, draws her aside for a moment, seizes a knife from a butcher's shambles in the forum, plunges it into her breast, and, waving the weapon still stained with the blood of his child, makes his way impetuously through the horrified crowd, and rushes off with furious haste to his fellow-soldiers in the camps. Nothing is wanting here in the elements that make up a profoundly tragic situation. Pity for the parent unites with horror for the act to increase the detestation that is inspired by the

[1] "Qui fu fille Virginius,
Si cum dist Titus Livius."—Line 6328 (Michel).

crime of the ruler which had driven the man to do from love the work of hate.

But in the story, as told by Chaucer, the father, however wretched at heart, is cool and collected in manner. It is in no sudden transport of passion that he commits his most unnatural deed. He holds a conversation with his child in his own house, and announces to her the fate she is to undergo. Death must be her lot rather than dishonor. He then deliberately proceeds to cut off her head with his sword, and bears it to the decemvir as he is sitting in his judgment seat. It is practically inconceivable that if Chaucer had known the original story he would have followed the debased version of it that had gathered additional and disgusting horrors on its way to the Middle Ages. He was too great an artist to have ever adopted of his own accord clumsy devices and unnatural details, had he not felt himself bound by the requirements of historic fact. He is careful, indeed, to tell us that this story is not a fiction. He says expressly,

> "This is no fable,
> But knowen for historial thing notáble;[1]
> The sentence[2] of it sooth[3] is, out of doubt."

As it was a matter of historic record, his literary conscience prevented him from narrating the main circumstances any differently from what he supposed they actually were, however much he might feel himself authorized to fill in details which would heighten the general effect. But the representation of a father coolly chopping off the head of a daughter to save her from

[1] Well known. [2] Matter. [3] True.

dishonor is a picture that does not adapt itself easily to poetic treatment. Even if we applaud the act, we do not enjoy its recital. The fact that the poet followed this version of the story is almost conclusive proof that he was unacquainted with the far infinitely more natural and effective form of it which the great historian narrated.

No further mention of Livy is found in Chaucer. Nor is there any further allusion to events he records. This does not prove that Chaucer had not read his writings; but it certainly does not imply that he had. I am not, however, seeking to maintain that the poet was unacquainted with the work of the historian, even as a whole; only that, up to this time, no satisfactory evidence has been produced to show that he was actually acquainted with any part of it whatever. The references to him that have been cited are of a purely conventional character. They do no more than indicate that he knew that such an author had once existed, and knew besides, in a general way, what he wrote. But that Chaucer had ever read what he wrote, they present no proof. It would hardly be safe to take the same ground as regards his knowledge of Suetonius. In the case of this author, there are one or two passages that may be fairly deemed to indicate familiarity with his writings. He is twice mentioned by the poet. Both instances occur in the Monk's tale. The first is in the account which is given of Nero. He, it is said,

> "As telleth us Suetonius,
> The widè world had in subjectìón,
> Both east and west, south and septemtrión."

Yet here, however, the same state of things exists as in the similar citation of Livy. These lines, if they can be regarded as evidence at all, prove ignorance on Chaucer's part, and not knowledge. It is true that Nero had the then known world in subjection. But Suetonius makes no such assertion. He had, in truth, no occasion to make it. The *Roman de la Rose* does make it, however.[1] That was the work which the English poet mainly followed in this particular narrative. In it Suetonius is given as the source from which the details are taken of the life and death of the Roman emperor. As Chaucer, when he adopted from this work the story of Virginia, adopted from it also the name of Livy as the authority for it, so in the case of Nero he seems to have followed the same course. He mentions Suetonius because Jean de Meung had mentioned him before. Still, in this latter instance there are facts that go to show that Chaucer had read the Latin original also. Suetonius, in describing the extravagance of Nero, says that he never wore the same garment twice, and was accustomed to fish with a golden net. These statements appear in the Monk's tale. They are not found in the *Roman de la Rose*. In the account of Julius Cæsar, in the same tale, this same author is mentioned for the second and last time. In that he appears as one of the three writers to whom the reader is referred for fuller

[1] "Qui fu de tout le monde sires."—Line 7151 (Michel).

"Si tint-il l'empire de Rome
Cis desloiaus que ge ci di ;
Et d'orient et de midi,
D'occident, de septentrion,
Tint-il la jurisdicion."—Lines 6982–6986 (Michel).

information about the life of the great dictator. It cannot be said that the narrative of the monk owes many details to the three authorities that are specified. Some of the incidents he could have derived from Suetonius, but all of them are to be found in other authorities with which the poet was unquestionably familiar.

These are the only prose authors, who by any stretch of language can be called classical, that are mentioned by Chaucer himself. In enumerating them we may be far from having exhausted the list of the writers he had read ; but we have practically exhausted all the evidence that can be, or at any rate has been, collected upon the subject. Acquaintance on his part with many others may have existed. In the case of several it has been at various times strongly asserted. But the proofs brought forward are, to say the least, not absolutely convincing in any instance, and in nearly all are utterly unsatisfactory. They are almost invariably based upon the fact that the poet's works contain some statement which is also contained in the work of the author with whom it is sought to establish his familiarity. The value of this evidence obviously depends upon the character of the details that are common to the two writers. These may consist of a large number of incidents of universal notoriety. These would necessarily furnish no ground for coming to any satisfactory conclusion. On the other hand, the point of agreement may consist of nothing more than a single item, but so peculiar, so variant from the account generally given, as to establish almost beyond question the borrowing of it by the one author from the other. Most of these imputed debts, however,

belong to the former class. Among the productions with which a possible acquaintance on Chaucer's part has been maintained are the 'Fables' of Hyginus, a writer who flourished in the time of Augustus Cæsar.[1] This particular work seems to have furnished the model of the much more elaborate treatise of Boccaccio on the 'Genealogy of the Gods.' Another writer is Paulus Orosius. He belongs to the early part of the fifth century, and is probably entitled to the distinction of having produced the most absolutely worthless of any well-known history that it has ever fallen to the lot of man to compile. It enjoyed great reputation in the Middle Ages. One evidence of the respect in which it was held is the fact that it was translated into our early tongue by King Alfred. There is also the elder Pliny. Many of the statements contained in his 'Natural History' had become widely current long before Chaucer's time. They were in some instances derived directly from his own work, though more frequently from the *Polyhistor* of Solinus. There is really nothing that can be found to prove the poet's acquaintance with his writings, though there are two or three passages which suggest that such a thing may have been possible. A much

[1] The only passage I have chanced to meet in Chaucer which has even a plausible appearance of having been taken from Hyginus consists of two lines in the first book of *Troilus and Cressida*, in which Pandarus tells his friend that it is no way to succeed in love,

"To wallow and weep as Niobe the queen,
Whose tearès yet in marble ben y-seen."

This certainly bears a close resemblance to the following passage in the *Fabulæ*, ix., which treats of Niobe: "At genetrix liberis orba, flendo lapidea facta esse dicitur in monte Sipylo. Ejusque hodie lacrymæ manare dicuntur." Unfortunately, a similar statement can be found in the sixth book of Chaucer's favorite work, the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid; and, if anything, it is nearer to his language, as these lines show:

"Fixa cacumine montis
Liquitur, et lacrymas etiamnum marmora manant."—vi., 311.

stronger argument can be made for Chaucer's knowledge of Florus. This writer, who flourished in the time of Trajan, wrote an epitome of Roman history from the founding of the city to the establishment of the empire under Augustus. The account of Cleopatra in the 'Legend of Good Women,' it has been maintained, was based upon this work. The evidence is not fully satisfactory. It strictly consists of little more than the slight detail that the "purple sail" of the queen in her flight from the battle of Actium appears in both writers. Still, the fact of acquaintance with this author is in itself highly probable. The epitome of Florus was a popular work in the Middle Ages, largely because it was an epitome. The main difficulty in establishing Chaucer's familiarity with the historian is that the poet failed to follow his authority more accurately, that is, if we go on the assumption that he followed him at all. He took pains to assure us that his account of Cleopatra is true. As found in Florus, it is essentially true, though liable to misapprehension from the exceeding compression to which the details have been subjected. As found in Chaucer, its consonance with fact can scarcely be deemed its distinguishing characteristic.

With these, we leave the writers who flourished during the existence of the Roman empire. Two, and perhaps three, others there are that have not been included in this list. But they belong so peculiarly to the literary history of the Middle Ages that (though far earlier in point of time) they naturally find their place with the authors of that period. Before taking any of these up, however, we have another body of writers to consider,

with whom Chaucer displays some familiarity. These are the Christian fathers. In the prologue to her tale, the Wife of Bath informs us of the various stories of wicked wives which her fifth husband was in the habit of reading with special delight. It is in the following lines that she describes one particular volume that contributed particularly to his enjoyment:

" He had a book that gladly night and day
For his disport he wouldè read alway.
He clepèd[1] it Valery and Theophrast;
At whiche book he lough[2] alway full fast:
And eke there was sometime a clerk at Rome,
A cardinal, that hightè Saint Jerome,
That made a book again[3] Jovinian,
In which book eke there was Tertullian,
Chrysippus, Trotula, and Heloise,
That was abbessè not far from Paris;
And eke the Parables of Solomon,
Ovídès Art, and bokès many one;
And allè these were bound in one volúme."

This book is so precisely described, and its contents are so carefully noted, that there is every reason to believe that it was one which had an actual existence, and had been seen and handled by the poet himself. It was clearly made up, as in the age of manuscript were many of these volumes, of a number of separate treatises. About some of those that are here mentioned we cannot feel very certain. There existed a medical writer called Trotula, of disputed sex. According to one account, she was a physician and a woman of great learning. The work bearing his or her name is still extant, and

[1] Called. [2] Laughed. [3] Against.

may be that which Chaucer here specifies.[1] Who Chrysippus was, Tyrwhitt declared himself unable even to guess; for the famous Stoic philosopher could hardly have been the one meant. It is, in truth, vain to conjecture who were the writers designated, so long as there are no data to identify either them or what they wrote. The books that go under the titles of Valery and Theophrast will be discussed later. Here it is sufficient to say that all which Chaucer knew of the latter was preserved by Saint Jerome. The Parables or Proverbs of Solomon, and Ovid's 'Art of Love,' need no further description. The same thing may be said of what is here briefly called Heloise. The celebrated correspondence between her and Abelard consists of eight epistles, if we reckon among them, as is usually done, the one which the latter wrote to a friend, detailing the story of his misfortunes. The three letters which Heloise wrote have never lost the fame which they early gained; but this is the only place in Chaucer where any reference is made either to them or to their writer.

There is less uncertainty about the Christian fathers. The mention of Tertullian shows that at least some one of his treatises must have been included in this volume. There is nothing to indicate, however, which one is meant. Tyrwhitt chose to consider it the discourse *De Pallio*. It is hard to discover his reason. In that work Tertullian simply defended himself against the ridicule that had been aroused by the abandonment of the ordinary dress in favor of the pallium, the mantle usually worn by the ascetics. Other editors have

[1] Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Latina*, vol. vi., p. 773.

fixed upon the treatise *De Cultu Feminarum*. In this he criticised the time and attention paid by women to the adornment of their persons, and was especially severe upon the painting of the face and the dyeing of the hair. The idea that underlay the selection of these particular pieces seems to have been, that the production of Tertullian chosen should correspond as much as possible with the general nature of the poem in which he is mentioned. It cannot be said, in this view, that the choice of either of the above has been particularly happy. It was questions of marriage and celibacy, and the lawfulness of second marriage, that interested the Wife of Bath, and were made the subjects of her irreverent comment. There were, accordingly, several other treatises of this earliest of the Latin fathers which would fit more appropriately than either of those mentioned in a collection of writings that touched even remotely upon the subject she discussed. Some of them were, indeed, upon the very subject. There was the work entitled *Ad Uxorem*, in which Tertullian exhorted his wife not to marry a second time in case he died before her. In it he declared that, while marriage was good, celibacy was better. There was also the treatise *De Exhortatione Castitatis*. In this, not content with attacking second marriage as a species of adultery, he went so far as to say that even first marriage is akin to that crime. Whether either of these, or some one of the others that might be specified, was the particular production included in this volume, we have no means of determining. We have, indeed, none of ascertaining whether Chaucer was familiar with anything of Tertullian besides

his name. Here is the only place where mention is made of him in his writings.

With a particular work of another one of the Latin fathers, however, the poet displays the most thorough familiarity. This is the treatise of Jerome against Jovinian. The latter was a monk who died early in the fifth century. In an age when, on some points, men had largely lost their senses, he had managed to retain his. He argued against the superior merit of celibacy, and took the ground that marrying or not marrying was alike acceptable to God. There were other views of his which it is out of the province of this work to discuss. It was his doctrine about matrimony that more than anything else excited the ire of the saint. It constitutes the subject of the first of the two books which make up the treatise, or rather invective, which he wrote against Jovinian. His attack upon his opponent is of a kind unfortunately characteristic of the saints of all ages. It is violent, unfair, and grossly abusive. For these reasons it affords most entertaining reading. To no one did it ever furnish more amusement than to Chaucer. His notions about the Christian father himself are rather vague. But there is nothing vague in his knowledge of this one particular work of his. The extraordinary use he made of it will be fully pointed out elsewhere. To it the prologue to the tale of the Wife of Bath owes not only numerous passages, but even its existence. Nor is this the only one of Chaucer's works in which familiarity with it is shown. The historical examples which the saint sets forth of the conduct of heathen matrons and maids in preferring

death to dishonor, are nearly all introduced by the poet into his Franklin's tale.[1] From the forty-first chapter are taken the accounts of the voluntary sacrifice of their lives by the daughters of Phido, by the fifty Lacedæmonian maidens, by Stymphalides, by the daughters of Scedasus, by the two Theban virgins, and by the daughter of Demotion. From the forty-third chapter is taken the account of the death of the wife of Hasdrubal, who threw herself with her children into the flames of her burning house when Carthage was captured. This same incident was again used by Chaucer in the tale of the Nun's Priest. From the forty-fourth chapter are taken the accounts of the wife of Niceratus, of Artemisia, the Carian queen, who built the mausoleum in honor of her dead husband; of Teuta, the Illyrian queen, and of the mistress of Alcibiades, who risked death to commit to the grave the unburied body of her lord. From the forty-fifth chapter are taken the accounts of the death of Panthea, who refused to survive her husband, Abradotes; and of Rhodogune, the daughter of Darius, who killed her nurse because she sought to persuade her to a second marriage. In it occurs also the mention of Alcestis dying for her lord; of the chastity of Penelope, with Homer cited as the authority, and of the unwillingness of Laodamia to survive Protesilaus. In the forty-sixth chapter are references to the story of Lucretia, to Bilia, to the wife of Duilius, to the inability of Portia to survive Brutus, and to the refusal of Valeria to marry a second time. These are the examples to which the god of love refers in the first version

[1] Lines 638–728.

of the prologue to the 'Legend of Good Women' in the course of the censure which he is represented as bestowing upon Chaucer for his failure to record the noble deeds of women that had shown themselves good and true. With a direct reference to these very narratives, he asks:

"What saith Jerome against Jovinian?
How cleanè maidens and how truè wives,
How steadfast widows during all hire[1] lives
Telleth Jerome; and that not of a few,
But, I dare say, an hundred on a rew;[2]
That it is pity for to read and ruth,
The wo that they enduren for hire[1] truth.
For to hire[1] love weren they so true,
That rather than they wouldè take a new,
They chosen to be dead[3] in sundry wise,
And dieden as the story will devise."

It is this treatise of Jerome, also, that is the authority for the introduction of 'Marcia Catoun' into the ballade contained in this same poem. It is the daughter, and not the wife, of Cato that is meant. The Christian father celebrates her for her refusal to marry a second time, though the actual reason she gives for her course is that she found no man who wished her so much as he did her property.[4]

On the other hand, there are several passages, not altogether complimentary to the female sex, that Chaucer borrowed from this same treatise. From its forty-eighth chapter he took the story of the wife of Socrates.

[1] Their.
[2] Row.
[3] To die.
[4] "Marcia Catonis filia minor, quum quæreretur ab ea, cur post amissum maritum, denuo non nuberet, respondit, non se invenire virum, qui se magis vellet quam sua."—*Hieronymus adversus Jovinianum*, i. 46.

This is itself a fragment, which Jerome has preserved, of the lost work of Seneca *De Matrimonio*. In this same chapter occur also the references to the shameful conduct of Pasiphae, of Clytemnestra, and the wife of Amphiaraus. Upon a short story contained in it there is also based the following passage in the Merchant's tale, where Justinus, in dissuading his brother from marriage, expresses his feelings in these words:

" For, God it wot, I have wept many a tear
Full prively, syn[1] I have had a wife.
Praise who so will a wedded mannès life,
Certáin I find in it but cost and care,
And observánces of all blisses bare;
And yet, God wot, my neighèbours about,
And namèly[2] of women many a route,
Say that I have the mostè steadfast wife,
And eke the meekest one that beareth life;
But I wot best where wringeth me my shoe."

In Jerome, the story is told of a certain Roman who divorced his wife though she was rich and beautiful and chaste. When he was pressed by his friends to give a reason for this unreasonable proceeding, he simply stretched forth his foot. " This shoe," he said, " which you see, seems to you new and elegant; but no one besides myself knows where it wrings me."

To the second book of this treatise of Jerome, Chaucer is not so much indebted. Jovinian had also taken the ground that he who fasted, and he who did not fast, were equally acceptable in the sight of God. One or two of the comments which Jerome made upon this

[1] Since. [2] Especially.

view appear in the religious discourse which the Pardoner embodied in his tale. When Adam fasted, he tells us, he was in paradise; when he took to eating, or gluttony as he terms it, he was ejected. In the case of this remark, many of the manuscripts have on their margin the very passage from the treatise against Jovinian as the authority for the assertion. It occurs in the fifteenth chapter of the second book. We are told again in the eighth chapter that lands and seas are searched to satisfy the cravings of the appetite. Most of the Pardoner's comments upon the indulgence in the pleasures of the table are taken from the work of Innocent III., which the poet informs us that he himself translated. It was the words of Jerome, however, that inspired the following lines:

> "Alas! the shortè throat, the tender mouth
> Maketh that East and West and North and South,
> In earth, in air and water men to-swink,[1]
> To get a glutton dainty meat and drink."[2]

There is also in the poem called 'Fortune' an evident allusion to a statement in the sixth chapter of this same book in which the value of animals not as food, but as medicine, is considered. "The gall of the hyena," says Jerome, "restores the clearness of the vision." This is the authority for these lines in the English poem:

> "Thee needeth not the gall of none hyene,
> That cureth eyen darked for penance."

But as this piece was probably a translation, no stress

[1] Toil excessively.

[2] "Propter brevem gulæ voluptatem terræ lustrantur et maria; et ut mulsum vinum pretiosusque cibus fauces nostras transeat, totius vitæ opera desudamus."—ii., cap. 8.

can well be laid upon the quotation as any proof of acquaintance with the work from which it was derived.

These are all the passages that indicate Chaucer's knowledge of the writings of Saint Jerome. He uses, in two or three places, indeed, the phrase "to make a virtue of necessity," which the Christian father originated. But this had long before been adopted into the common speech of men. It will be observed that from the evidence of these references there is but one of his works with which the poet is acquainted. If he were familiar with others, he either found no occasion or lacked the disposition to make use of them. There were still two more of the fathers whose writings he had read about, if he had not actually read. One of them was Saint Augustine. To him he may have been attracted by a purely intellectual sympathy. The discussions in which the Bishop of Hippo took a prominent part were on subjects which appealed most powerfully to certain tastes of the poet. Whether Chaucer ever actually studied the works which Augustine produced in the course of the Pelagian controversy, there is nothing to show with certainty. We can only say, from the allusion to him in the tale of the Nun's Priest, that he must have been acquainted, in a general way at least, with the nature of the Christian father's views on foreknowledge and free-will, and recognized the important part he had borne in the exposition of these doctrines. Except in this instance, however, Chaucer mentions his name but once in connection with anything he wrote. It is in the 'Legend of Good Women,' when the poet is speaking of the honor paid to Lucretia, that he says,

"Not only that these pagans her commend,
But he that cleped[1] is in our legénd
The great Austin, hath great compassìón
Of this Lucrece that starf[2] at Romè town."

The reference is here to a discussion in the early part of the work *De Civitate Dei*, in which Augustine maintains that under no circumstances is suicide justifiable. This inevitably brings up the instance of Lucretia. Her conduct in putting an end to her life had met with the plaudits of the heathen world. It is in the nineteenth chapter of the first book that he takes up her case. His language hardly justifies the assertion that he expressed for her great compassion. Still, he recognized as the impelling motive for her deed that she, a proud woman, foresaw with dread, if she continued to live, that she would be secretly subjected to the charge of having connived at the wrong she had been compelled to endure. This is the full extent to which Augustine can be said to exhibit pity. In fact, he puts the argument in regard to her conduct in the shape of a dilemma. If she consented to the act, she was guilty of adultery, and as a guilty woman slew herself from a feeling of remorse. If she did not consent to it, the sin of self-murder is made heavier, inasmuch as she who was chaste at heart slew an innocent woman, who she knew had committed no crime.

Though Augustine's name is not itself mentioned, he is cited in another place by the title of the Doctor. In describing in the story of Virginia the character of that

[1] Called. [2] Died.

maiden, and the reputation for beauty and goodness that she had acquired, the poet adds:

> "Through that land they praisèd her each one
> That lovèd virtue, save Envý alone,
> That sorry is of other mennès weal,
> And glad is of hire[1] sorrow and unheal;[2]
> The Doctor maketh this descriptiòn."

Against this last line in the margin of two of the best manuscripts appears the name Augustinus. The reference receives confirmation, if confirmation be needed, in the fact that this same statement occurs in about the same words in the Parson's tale. It is there expressly ascribed to Saint Austin. The passage in that author which the poet had in mind is apparently the one to the effect that envy is the hatred of the good fortune of another. This occurs several times in Augustine's writings.[3] From his repeating it so frequently, it is not unlikely that it had become a well-known saying. Chaucer's quotation of it does not establish his direct familiarity with its source any more than does the reference to the story of Lucretia furnish indisputable proof of his acquaintance with the eloquent work in which it appeared, though the weight of evidence is assuredly in favor of his having read at least as much of it as contains this particular portion.

The last of the Christian fathers to whom we come in connection with the poet was Origen. A treatise of his Chaucer tells us that he himself translated. In the prol-

[1] Their.
[2] Ill fortune.
[3] *E. g.*, "Quid est invidia nisi odium felicitatis alienæ?" — Sermo cccliii.

ogue to the 'Legend of Good Women,' after stating that he had written a life of St. Cecilia, he adds:

> "He made also, gone sithens[1] a great while,
> Origenes upon the Maudelaine."

There is no absolute certainty what this work was. Still, there is a general agreement that it was the homily upon Mary Magdalene which, during the Middle Ages, was imputed to Origen. This was Tyrwhitt's conjecture, and nothing better has ever been suggested to take its place. The homily itself is now universally conceded to be spurious. It is no longer included in the works of Origen. In early printed Latin translations, however, it finds a place. The discourse is based upon the verse in the twentieth chapter of the Gospel of John, in which Mary Magdalene is represented as standing weeping at the sepulchre of Christ. There is no apparent merit of any sort in the original that would make it worthy of a translation; and were it not for the poetic possibilities that, to the eye of genius, lie latent in the barrenest of subjects, it would seem impossible to import into it an interest that is not in the piece itself. Chaucer's version of this production—if we assume that this was the one meant—has perished. No record of any sort exists that would enable us to decide whether it was in prose or poetry, or whether its loss is something to be regretted for its value in itself, as well as for the interest it would have as coming from his hand. It is to be added, moreover, that there is not a passage or phrase from this homily that reappears in any of the works of the poet that are now extant.

[1] Since.

II.

THE great Italian and Latin authors who were the favorites of Chaucer have remained the favorites of later readers. Even several of the other writers that have been mentioned, though they cannot be reckoned among those of the first rank, still continue to exert an appreciable influence. We have now to deal, however, with productions of an altogether different class. We are coming to a body of men who, so far as they are known, are known simply to specialists, and in some cases only to the most special of specialists. Every age has certain books that it regards with peculiar favor. Succeeding ages are not merely astonished at its admiring them, but find it difficult to comprehend how it ever managed to read them. There is nothing more grotesque in the history of literature than the air of superiority which each century assumes when it finds something unendurable which the previous century had found supremely interesting. Because its taste has changed, it takes for granted that its taste has improved. Its innocent self-satisfaction will be repeated by the century that follows, which, in turn, will assume that it has outgrown the childish preferences which delighted its predecessor. This fact, that forces itself upon the attention of the student of literary history, makes it a somewhat hazard-

ous proceeding to speak as one feels about the authors now to be mentioned. Some of them were men that had great repute in their day; at least that statement can be truly made of some of the works they wrote. A few of them were favorites of successive generations. It seems to us hardly proper to speak of any of them as their delight. That is hardly the term we should apply to the feelings they are calculated to inspire. At any rate, whatever sentiments the perusal of their works aroused then, the reader who ventures to attack them now will not be disposed to look upon most of them as open to the charge of being frivolous.

Before entering upon the specific accounts of the authors who created the literature which Chaucer read, but much of which scarcely any one even reads about now, it is proper to take notice of a body of stories then in circulation with which he could not fail to be familiar, though it is rarely that any particular writer or writers can be named in connection with their production. To these belong the romances. Several of them have already been described as mentioned in the tale of Sir Thopas. Of the poet's acquaintance with them, and with others that he does not there specify, there can be no question. In the 'Death of Blanche' he has also furnished a reference to another romance then well known. It is that of the Emperor Octavian, an English version of which still exists. But besides these, and far transcending these in importance, were four great cycles of legendary stories in which the Middle Ages delighted. They had the additional good fortune of being regarded by many as veritable history. To some extent, indeed,

they supplanted the genuine history upon which, in two cases at least, they were founded. These legendary stories collected themselves about the lives and exploits of Alexander the Great, of Charlemagne, of Prince Arthur, and about the incidents directly or indirectly connected with the Trojan war. Perhaps to this list the story of Judas Maccabeus should be added, as he was adopted also as a hero of romance. There is no reason to doubt that Chaucer was familiar with all of them, though his references to the ones which centre about the first three are few in number and slight in importance. They need not detain us long. The Alexandrian legend was based primarily upon the spurious history attributed to Callisthenes. To it numerous romances owed their origin, and spread far and wide a story of the conqueror's career, in which fact and fable struggled for the mastery. Later, the principal agency in disseminating a knowledge of his life and achievements was the poem called the 'Alexandreid.' Through it his name and deeds were made familiar to all. According to the Monk's tale, the story of Alexander was so common that it was known, either in whole or in part, to every one of discretion. Outside of the details there given, Chaucer makes no further reference to him personally, beyond the mere citation of his name, with the single exception of a line or two in the 'House of Fame.'[1] In that there is a distinct allusion to the account of his ascent into the air in a chariot drawn by griffins. In the case of the Charlemagne legend, whatever is said of any incident belonging to it clusters about

[1] Lines 914, 915.

the name of Gano or Genilon, who imposed upon the credulity of his sovereign, and betrayed the Christian army to the heathen in the pass of Roncesvalles, where all the paladins fell fighting. He had accordingly been elevated to a place beside Judas Iscariot in the legendary story of the Middle Ages. He naturally served Chaucer, as he did every one else, as a specially striking example of treachery. It is, indeed, a somewhat peculiar fact that, in the popular development which the lives of both Charlemagne and Alexander received, the achievements of these celebrated men were minified rather than magnified. They are inferior in fiction to what they were in reality.

More familiarity may not have existed, but more is exhibited, with the Arthurian legend. This is, perhaps, what might be expected. The scene of the Wife of Bath's tale is laid in the court of that monarch. There is nothing, however, that occurs there to connect the incidents related specially with it, more than with the court of any other monarch. But the personages who belong to the Arthurian cycle of stories appear not unfrequently in Chaucer's writings. The beauty of Isolde, the courtesy of Gawain, the love of Lancelot, are all mentioned. In the tale of the Nun's Priest there is a specific reference to the book that dealt with the adventures of the last-named hero. This work, Chaucer says, "women hold in full great reverence." From his manner of speaking it is very clear that he does not share in their feelings. His references, indeed, to the persons and events in this particular story, which became later a favorite source of poetic inspiration, are not much more

numerous than to the Charlemagne legend, though they are more varied in character. Far different, however, is the part the Trojan story plays. It occupies no small space in the field covered by the poet's productions. The authors who made it famous are frequently mentioned. These writers it is necessary to recall with some particularity. Several of them are specially conspicuous examples of the transitoriness of reputation. The names of most, if not of all, of them were once familiar to every one who pretended to have a knowledge of history or poetry. To understand, therefore, the legend itself and Chaucer's references to it and treatment of it, as well as his knowledge of the writers concerned in its development, it will be necessary to give an account of how the story of Troy arose as the Middle Ages received it, and how it chanced to vary from the one handed down from classical antiquity.

In the fifth book of the Iliad, mention is made of an opulent and honorable inhabitant of Troy. He is a priest of Hephæstos, and his name is Dares. That is the single reference made to him by Homer. Even with him it occurs only incidentally, for it is of his sons that the poet is speaking. But in later literature this Dares was credited with having written an account of the destruction of Troy. There seems to be no doubt that a work bearing his name as its author was in existence in the third century after Christ. Ælian, at least, in his *Varia Historia*, says that he knows the Phrygian Iliad of Dares to be extant, and that the one who wrote it is reported to have lived before Homer.[1] This work,

[1] Book xi., chap. 2.

whatever it was, disappeared; but the repute, if any, that belonged to it was transferred to a spurious production, the composition of which is now usually assigned to the sixth century. This purported to be a Latin translation of the original. It is not a long history—consisting, in fact, but of forty-four short chapters. It gave an account of Troy from its conquest and destruction in the first Argonautic expedition by the companions of Jason, and its rebuilding by Priam, to its final destruction by the Greeks. It was in many ways a very clumsy forgery. Perhaps the very impudence of its pretensions contributed to its success. It was hardly to be presumed that any one who set out with a deliberate intention to deceive should fail to give an occasional air of verisimilitude to his statements. That it narrated events that never happened, and described persons that never existed, is a characteristic that it shares with many other historical works of repute which have received the approval of the ages. But it professed to have been discovered by the Roman writer Cornelius Nepos, and to have been translated by him into Latin. He is represented as saying of it that it was far more trustworthy than Homer, partly because its author flourished earlier than he, and partly because he did not shock the historic sense by representing the gods as fighting with men. This noble disdain of the supernatural was one of the reasons that led to the favor with which it met. Fraudulent as it was, with its meagre details couched in bad Latin, it was accepted as genuine history, and treated for centuries with a respect that has rarely been accorded to the truth.

As the history of Dares was the production of a Trojan, it naturally gave the most favorable view of that side. This was likewise a circumstance that recommended it to the people of Western Europe. These sincerely believed themselves to be the descendants of the men who had escaped from the ruined city. But even before it was written, another work had appeared which gave an account of the Trojan war from the point of view of the conquerors. It purported to be the production of Dictys, a native of Gnossus in Crete, who had been one of the companions of Idomeneus. The prefatory matter gave an account of the author and the marvellous circumstances of its discovery. After having written his history, Dictys took the singular resolution for an author, of ordering his book to be buried with him. His wishes were carried out, and the work, enclosed in a metal coffer, was deposited in his grave. There it remained undisturbed for centuries. But in the reign of the Emperor Nero an earthquake devastated Crete. Among other effects it wrought, it opened the tomb of Dictys and brought to light the hidden treasure. The work was written in Phœnician characters; but there were men in those days capable of reading these. By them it was translated into Greek. From that tongue the Latin version was subsequently made, which has come down to our own time. It is in six books, and is more than twice as long as the history of Dares. It tells the Trojan story from the abduction of Helen to the death of Ulysses, for in it, at the end of the fifth book, the city had fallen.

It was from these two works that the legendary story

of Troy was ultimately derived, in the form which found acceptance in the Middle Ages. Forgeries as they were, they were looked upon as specially distinguished for their truthfulness. On this account, they far outranked in estimation and importance the writings of Homer, which suffered under the serious charge of being deformed with fables and lies. They had this special title to credit, that they were the productions of two writers who had seen the men, and had shared in the actions they described. No wonder that the Middle Ages turned aside from the falsities of the Greek poet, who had flourished long after the events he narrated, to put implicit trust in the verities recorded by these historians who were eye-witnesses of what they told. This became the prevalent feeling. Homer fell into a good deal of discredit for the fictions he had foisted into the Trojan story. Chaucer himself bears witness to the existence of the sentiment, though it will be noticed that with his usual caution he makes no charge upon his own authority. In giving his list of the writers of this story in his 'House of Fame,' he points out the irreconcilable difference of their accounts, and the feeling engendered by it in the following lines:

"But yet I gan full well espy,
Betwix[1] hem[2] was a little envý.
One said that Homer madè lies,
Feigning in his poetries,
And was to Greekes favoráble;
Therefore held he it but fable." 1475–1480.

It is hardly necessary to say that Dares Phrygius and

[1] Betwixt. [2] Them.

Dictys Cretensis were persons full as imaginary as the events they described. But the histories that went under their name served as the basis upon which to build up a gigantic structure. This was mainly the work of Benoît de Sainte-More, a French trouvère who flourished in the latter half of the twelfth century. In a poem of more than thirty thousand lines he told the story of Troy. Dares, according to his own statement, was his principal authority. But as Dares has at least the merit of brevity, it follows that he expanded on a grand scale the account of the writer he followed. He not only furnished fresh details to the incidents given, he supplied the paucity of incidents by adding a number of his own invention. One of these contributions is the original of the story of 'Troilus and Cressida.' But Chaucer knows nothing of Benoît de Sainte-More. Nowhere in his writings is there even the remotest allusion to that author. His ignorance was shared apparently by most of his contemporaries. For a singular fate had overtaken the real creator of the romance of Troy. His own personality had largely disappeared, if it could not be said to have died in giving birth to the legend it had created. This was destined to gain a repute that was refused to its author. Less than a century after his actual death in the body, his romance was turned with some modifications into Latin prose by a Sicilian physician named Guido da Colonna, or, as the name variously appears, Guido delle Colonne, or Guido de Columnis. His version was completed, as he tells us, in 1287; but he does not tell us that it is a version. He did not forget the incidents that Benoît de Sainte-

More had invented; he forgot to mention the name of their inventor. This he calmly suppressed. Not content with that, he pretended to found his account upon the two histories of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis. The plagiarism was as successful as it was bold. Guido da Colonna's prose not only simply supplanted the poetry of Benoît, it largely extinguished the knowledge of it. He thereby destroyed the reputation of the original teller of the story. It may be thought some compensation that he extended the reputation of the story that was told. His version of it was made into bad Latin; but it was Latin. This meant that the legend had overleaped the narrow limits of country and speech, and had passed into the universal language. It had gained the freedom of Europe. It became thenceforth the standard history of the Trojan war. It was translated into every modern tongue that was then beginning to have a literature. It gave birth, in turn, to new creations. It carried with it everywhere the name of Guido da Colonna as its author. Benoît was forgotten, or, if remembered at all, was remembered to be mentioned as the translator into French of the work that had been stolen from himself.

It is only within a comparatively recent period that the researches of scholars have established the facts about Benoît de Sainte-More in their true light. Warton, in the first volume of his 'History of English Poetry,' published in 1774, knew him only as the author of an ancient poem on the war of Troy, "at least not posterior to the thirteenth century."[1] In his second volume,

[1] Vol. i., p. 136, 1st ed.

published in 1778, he went further, and remarked in a note that he believed Colonna was much indebted to him.[1] For, in the meantime, the true state of the case had been indicated, though not demonstrated. Tyrwhitt, whom nothing seemed to escape, in a note to his edition of the 'Canterbury Tales,' published in 1775, had pointed out that the work that went under the name of Guido was in all probability a translation of the *Roman de Troie* of Benoît.[2] But he did little more than express his opinion; he made no serious effort to establish its truth. The undertaking which he had not the inclination or time to attempt, was taken up by Francis Douce. In his 'Illustrations of Shakspeare,' published in 1807, he announced the fact that he had made an examination of the two works, and reported the results at which he had arrived.[3] "The task," he wrote, "which Mr. Tyrwhitt had declined has been submitted to; and the comparison has shown that Guido, whose performance had long been regarded as original, has only translated the Norman writer into Latin. It is most probable that he found Benoît's work when he came into England, as he is recorded to have done; and that, pursuing a practice too prevalent in the Middle Ages, he distinctly suppressed the mention of his real original." Unfortunately, Douce contented himself with merely stating the conclusions he had reached. He gave no proof of his assertion of plagiarism. The fact, therefore, escaped general attention, though his statement was embodied in so common a work as Dunlop's

[1] Vol. ii., p. 92, 1st ed. (p. 305 of vol. ii., ed. of 1840).

[2] See vol. i., p. 303.

[3] *Illustrations of Shakspeare and of Ancient Manners* (London, edition of 1839), p. 353.

'History of Fiction.'[1] All these proofs were furnished with much other matter by a French scholar, who, in 1871, published in full the *Roman de Troie* of Benoît, with a life of the author, and a most valuable account of the transformation which the legend had undergone in the Middle Ages. The fact of Guido da Colonna's plagiarism was established indisputably, and is now no longer questioned.[2]

The Trojan story, however, as told by Guido, became the source from which later writers took incidents and passages which they modified and shaped to suit their own purposes. One of these was now to receive a further development in which Chaucer himself was concerned. It was in the poem of Benoît that the episode of Troilus and Cressida, or Briseide, as she is there called, made its first appearance. Both of these characters appear in Dares. In Dictys there is no mention of Briseis, and the briefest possible one of Troilus as slain by Achilles. In Dares, again, there is merely a short description of Briseis, but in several places mention is made of the exploits of Troilus. There is, however, no connection of any sort indicated between the two characters who were afterwards to become so famous in modern poetry. That was the invention of Benoît. In his Trojan romance, Briseide appears for the first time as the daughter of the fugitive priest Calchas, and the beloved of Troilus. But in his work it is the parting of the two that is described, not their coming together.

[1] Vol. ii., p. 111, 2d edition (1816).

[2] *Benoît de Sainte-More et Le Roman de Troie ou les Métamorphoses d'Homère et de l'Épopée Gréco-Latine au Moyen-Âge.* Par A. Joly, Professeur à la Faculté des Lettres de Caen (2 vols., Paris, 1871).

The poem of the French trouvère is taken up rather with the disloyalty to her lover of the daughter of Calchas, after she is compelled to return to her father in the Grecian camp. This episode was now to meet with a still further development at the hands of Boccaccio. Briseide, or as she appears in his poem, Griseida, was changed from a maiden to a widow. To the previously recorded tale of her faithlessness he prefixed the account of her wooing and winning by Troilus. He created also the character of Pandarus, and brought him into the action of the piece. Boccaccio was followed in turn by Chaucer. He still further modified and expounded the details of the story, though he kept close to the general outline. From the cousin of Cressida, which he had been in the *Filostrato*, Pandarus was changed by him into her uncle. In the description of this personage the fullest powers of the poet were put forth, and with signal success. He became, as Rossetti has remarked, "one of the most complete pieces of character-painting in our literature."[1]

Of Chaucer's perfect familiarity with the Trojan story the evidence is simply overwhelming. The names of those that took part in the famous war, as well as the events connected with it, are constantly on his lips. There is, perhaps, little reason to doubt his familiarity also with the three principal authorities that have been described. With respect to one of them, we can certainly feel the fullest confidence on that point. That Guido was known to him, the accounts of Hypsypile and

[1] W. M. Rossetti, in Prefatory Remarks to his *Comparison of the 'Troilus and Cressida' with the 'Filostrato,'* p. viii.

Medea in the 'Legend of Good Women' furnish positive proof. He gives, indeed, the best sort of testimony as to his familiarity with his work by telling us not what it does contain, but what it does not. Of his knowledge of Dictys Cretensis we cannot be quite so certain. Still, he mentions him in 'Troilus and Cressida,'[1] along with Homer and Dares. He is probably also the one who is meant in the 'House of Fame,'[2] though in all manuscripts and printed editions the name that there appears is Tytus. His familiarity with Dares there is likewise little reason to question. He speaks of him more constantly than of any of the others. This may be due to the fact, however, that he stood forth to the eyes of the men of the Middle Ages as the great original source of the version of the Trojan story, which appealed to their prepossessions and their ancestral pride. But he presumably quotes him at first hand. The descriptions given of Troilus,[3] Cressida,[4] and Diomede[5] in the fifth book of 'Troilus and Cressida' must have come ultimately, and may have been taken directly, from the description of the same persons in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of his history. There are one or two places besides which strongly confirm this view.[6] Yet, again, there is a passage which, interpreted literally, would leave the impression that he knew no more of the text of Dares than he did of that of Homer with whom he joins him. At the conclusion of 'Troilus and Cressida' he informs the reader that he set out to give

[1] i., 146.
[2] Line 1467.
[3] v 827.
[4] v., 806.
[5] v., 799.
[6] See Bech in *Anglia*, vol. v., p. 324, and note to p. 260 of this volume.

only an account of the fortune in love of his hero. He who wishes to know of his warlike achievements must consult Dares.[1] In the brief and meagre narrative of that writer the inquirer would find little to reward his search. He would learn, indeed, that Troilus was a great leader; that on several occasions he put the Greeks to flight, drove back the myrmidons, wounded Diomede, Agamemnon, and even Achilles, and was at last only slain when taken at great disadvantage. But these details occupy hardly any more space in the history of Dares than they do in the account just given. It was in Guido da Colonna's work that Chaucer found the martial deeds of Troilus recounted in full, the slaughter he wrought, and the terror he inspired. While he was speaking of Dares, he was thinking of the 'Trojan History' of the Sicilian physician which professes to have been itself derived from the work of the Phrygian soldier.

One further expansion of the Trojan legend there was, of which from its very nature Chaucer could not have been ignorant. This is that offshoot of the story which developed a systematic history of the early inhabitants of Great Britain, peopled that country with descendants of the Trojans, and furnished English literature with subjects for tragedy and narrative and song, like Lear and Cymbeline and Gorboduc, and the thousand tales that collect about Arthur and Merlin. This legend is first known to us in the *Historia Britonum* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, which was produced shortly before 1150. He is pretty certainly the one whom the poet had in mind

[1] v., 1785.

when, among the writers who bore up the fame of Troy, he mentioned "English Galfrid."[1] According to the story this author recorded, Brutus, the great-grandson of Æneas, collected the descendants of the captive Trojans, released them from their servitude to the Greeks, and, after a long series of adventures, found his way to the island which received from him the name of Britain. With a fine feeling for accuracy and precision of statement, this settlement of the country is said to have occurred at the time that Eli was judge over Israel, and the ark of God was in the hands of the Philistines. Then followed the details of the lives and acts of the hundred kings that succeeded down to the conquest of the island by the Saxons. The history of Geoffrey became the unquestioned belief of the centuries that followed, though we know it to have been denounced by one early writer, William of Newburgh, as a tissue of absurd fables. The story was possibly disbelieved by Chaucer. He certainly evinces a suspicious tone of levity in his references to Arthur and Lancelot. Nevertheless, it was a story with the details of which he could not have helped being familiar. The only mention, however, he makes of Geoffrey of Monmouth is contained in the passage to which notice has just been called. It is a question whether this elaborate history, which did not contain a single particle of truth, was a pure invention of the reputed author whose name it bears, or was translated by him, as he says, from a very ancient book in the British tongue. To the weary investigator of insoluble problems the question may not seem of much consequence. Where everything that was

[1] *House of Fame*, l. 1470.

originated is a lie, an additional lie as to how it originated is hardly worthy of prolonged discussion.

These stories, though once the delight of the many, are at present known but to the few. But, however little heard of in our day, they can be called familiar in comparison with the writings to the consideration of which we now come. These were works that were produced anywhere from the fourth century down to the time in which Chaucer himself wrote. A large proportion of them belong to the two centuries immediately preceding, especially to the twelfth. The list is remarkable both for character and variety. Books used in education, medical treatises, religious rhapsodies, Bible histories, stories of saints and martyrs, allegorical works, poems of every kind and upon every subject, all these couched in the universal Latin language, formed a motley collection, which, however inferior in quality, exceeded in number, and perhaps in quantity, all the productions with which the poet was familiar, that belonged to any one modern tongue, and, indeed, to all of them put together. As following legitimately the accounts just given of the cycles of tales that then had currency, it is proper to begin with the discussion of the two works which consist of collections of stories.

One of these is especially famous, and with a knowledge of it Chaucer has generally been credited. It may be conceded that this was the case. At any rate, it was very likely to have been the case. Still, the evidence in favor of any acquaintance with it on his part is not of the strongest character. The work to which reference is made is entitled *Gesta Romanorum*. It is a compila-

tion of stories which are taken from every conceivable quarter. But it became itself, in turn, the source to which some of the most celebrated productions of modern literature owe their origin, directly or indirectly. To each one of the tales contained in it there is added what was then termed an improving morality. Though this latter was the thing for which the story was really told, it is a part which the modern reader is very certain, and the ancient one was in all probability very apt, to skip. The fame of this work had become widespread even in Chaucer's day, though the collection, by whomsoever made, appears to have hardly reached even then the first century of its existence. Yet it is almost certain that to it the poet makes no direct reference. The "Roman gests," whatever may be understood by the expression, are mentioned three times in his writings—once in the Merchant's and once in the Man of Law's tale, and once in the prologue to that of the Wife of Bath. In the first one of these, in the course of the dialogue carried on between Pluto and Proserpine about the virtues of woman, the new-created queen of fairy points to the fact that many of her sex had suffered martyrdom for the faith. She then proceeds to follow up her advantage by showing that their good name was also well established in secular history. She tells her doubting lord,

> "The Roman gestès eke make rémembránce
> Of many a very truè wife also."

The same or similar phraseology is used in the tale of the Man of Law. There it is said that the life of the Emperor Maurice may be found in "old Roman gestes."

Again, in the prologue to her tale, the Wife of Bath speaks of "old Roman gestes," which were far from complimentary in the accounts they give of her sex. But what these were, and where they came from, she proceeds to tell us. We are therefore in a position to assert positively that in this instance there was not even a remote allusion to the famous compilation of which we are speaking. The same statement can be safely made of the reference found in the tale of the Man of Law. Though in the *Gesta Romanorum* there are emperors almost without number, there is no mention there of any one with the name of Maurice. It is the history of Rome which was in the poet's mind when he made use of the expression. Nor need there be any hesitation in maintaining that the same explanation will do for the lines in the Merchant's tale. The noble example furnished by many of the Roman matrons had long been made the subject of story. The name of Lucretia, in particular, had become almost a household word. There was no one more familiar with its details than Chaucer himself; and by him had been told the very circumstances that led to her voluntary death.

It would, doubtless, be reasonable to assume that the poet was well acquainted with this collection, which in his time was well and widely known. Still, it cannot be said that there exists certain evidence that such was the fact. There are incidents recorded in his writings, and statements made in them, that are not essentially different from those contained in the *Gesta Romanorum*. One of them we have already met with, together with the source from which it is directly derived. This is the account

of the judge, of whom Seneca tells, who put three innocent persons to death. Another we are yet to meet with in the reply of Arrius to the husband who was complaining of the tree upon which the three wives had hanged themselves. In this compilation also, as in the 'Parliament of Fowls,' the stork appears as the avenger of adultery. Not only does Lucretia appear in it, but likewise the story of Apollonius of Tyre, which Gower versified, and which Chaucer deliberately rejected as material unsuitable for a tale. All these things, and a few others not so significant, are common to the writings of the poet and to this prose collection. These coincidences, however, furnish no proof of indebtedness in any case. In several instances we can go further than mere denial, and positively affirm that there could have been no indebtedness.

There is, however, another collection of stories with which, to some extent, he was certainly familiar. This is *Legenda Aurea*, or the 'Golden Legend.' It is a work mainly taken up with the lives of the saints, though not exclusively limited to that subject. Still, the histories of about two hundred are included in it. The author was a Dominican friar, who died as Archbishop of Genoa, towards the end of the thirteenth century. He was called Jacobus Januensis or Genuensis—that is, the Genoan—and sometimes Jacobus a Voragine, from his birthplace. The *Legenda Aurea*—often styled *Historia Lombardica*—was the work by which he became widely known in his own time and the times immediately succeeding. It is the one which has preserved whatever knowledge of him has floated down to our own day. The marvellous deeds re-

corded in it of the saints and martyrs, and the witness they bore to the faith, made the work a favorite one with the devout Roman Catholics of the Middle Ages. Naturally the early Protestants did not view it with so partial eyes. It was with them a frequent object of attack. It was one of the productions mentioned by Becon, chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer, as being especially dear to "the synagogue of Satan."[1] In still another discourse of his upon the 'Acts of Christ and Antichrist,' he charges upon the latter as one of his practices that he "commandeth his praters to set forth to the people his laws and decrees, and to intermeddle them with tales out of *Legenda Aurea*." Chaucer evidently did not share in the feelings about the work entertained by the Reformers of the sixteenth century. From one of the lives contained in it—that of Saint Cecilia—he adopted no small part of the piece which now goes under the name of the Second Nun's tale, but which was originally an independent work. The first twelve stanzas were not taken by him from the 'Golden Legend.' But at line 85 his translation begins, and from that point on follows the original with closeness for about one half of the poem. Afterwards there are frequent additions and omissions.

Outside of the life of Saint Cecilia the 'Golden Legend' did not furnish to Chaucer any material worthy of mention. There is consequently little or nothing to indicate how familiar he was with the work as a whole. In the Man of Law's tale occurs the line,

"Who fed the Egyptian Mary in the cave?"

[1] *A Comfortable Epistle to the Afflicted People of God*, in '*Prayers and Other Pieces by Thomas Becon*,' p. 199 (Parker Society, 1844).

His knowledge of the Egyptian Mary may have been derived from this same quarter; but it cannot be positively asserted that such was the case. Her story is told in the 'Golden Legend.' Not a word, however, is said in it of her having occupied a cave. She is simply represented as dwelling in the desert beyond Jordan, and as having there lived for forty-seven years without the sight of a human being, subsisting all the time on three loaves of bread which she had bought in Jerusalem at the time of her conversion. The variation is not a matter of special consequence, especially as Chaucer was much in the habit of adding incidents of his own to the material he adopted. Still, it is sufficient to make it possible that he had learned the legend from some other source than the one just given. The 'Golden Legend' was far, indeed, from embracing all the biographies of this character that were then in vogue. Lives of the saints constituted a very favorite kind of reading in the Middle Ages. At least, as a great many of them were written, it is to be presumed that the producers of this sort of commodity felt reasonably sure of their public. It is not a class of fiction which appeals powerfully to the modern reader. It abounds in marvels and miracles. But the marvels are usually puerile, and the miracles are, if anything, too miraculous. Nor, as a general rule, do the persons celebrated make a favorable impression. By those of them who may be termed the missionary saints on account of their efforts for the propagation of the faith, there was displayed almost invariably a ferocious piety which was accompanied with a fairly brutal disregard of the feelings and sincerest convictions of those who differed with

them in opinion. This we are called upon to admire, because it was generally exhibited in a way to subject its possessors to instant death. Thus, Saint Thomas of India, a Franciscan friar who suffered martyrdom in 1322, is described in the *Acta Sanctorum* as reviling at Tanaha, in the coarsest terms, the religion of the cadi, before whom he is brought. He tells the magistrate that Mohammed was the son of perdition, that his place was in hell with his father the devil, and that there would be found all who observed his pestiferous law. Remarks like these may be true, but they are eminently not conciliatory. In many instances the attack upon the faith of others is apparently unprovoked. While, therefore, it may display zeal, it does not good manners. In fact, the most pronounced impression one receives after a somewhat protracted course of reading in the lives of the saints is that they were not gentlemen. The virtues with which they are credited are of so aggressive and disagreeable a nature as to force upon the mind the reluctant conviction that were it not for the wicked, life on earth would be made utterly unendurable by the good.

Chaucer, whose taste for reading was not fastidious, was, without question, familiar with his full proportion of this sort of literature. His story of Saint Cecilia is by no means based exclusively upon the life contained in the 'Golden Legend.' He drew quite largely upon another one attributed to Simeon Metaphrastes, who is asserted to have flourished at the beginning of the tenth century. This writer worked over a large number of these legendary lives, and seems also to have been held responsible for many with which he had no concern. To

his account of Saint Cecilia, Chaucer is indebted for many particulars in his Second Nun's tale.[1] But besides his references to those already described, there are several others of the saints of whom he speaks specifically enough to show that he was well acquainted with the mass of fable that had collected about their careers. One of these is Hugh of Lincoln. He is mentioned in the tale of the Prioress. His legendary story bears witness to the same cruel superstition as the story which she tells. There is also reference made by this same character to the devotional spirit manifested by one of the great saints of the Eastern church. She specifically celebrates Saint Nicholas:

> "For he so young to Christ did reverence."

He certainly is the most signal instance of precocious piety that these veracious lives afford. He never played, he never spoke an idle word, he always went to church. Similar things have been told, truly or untruly, of other children. But the future Archbishop of Myra proved his superiority to all competitors in this line of conduct by conscientiously refraining even as a baby from taking nourishment more than once on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Another of the saints of whom mention is made is Edward. In the prologue to his tale the Monk expresses his willingness to relate his life, but defers it for the sake of reciting some of the hundred tragedies he pro-

[1] See the admirable and exhaustive article on the sources of the *Second Nun's tale* contributed by Kölbing to *Englische Studien*, Band i. (1877), S. 215 ff., from which the fact above stated has been derived.

fesses to have in his cell. There are two recognized saints of this name, both Anglo-Saxon kings. One of these is the Edward who was murdered in 979. The other is the better-known Edward the Confessor. After the Norman Conquest no saints seem to have ascended the throne of England; at least none have been thought worthy of canonization. But it is a noteworthy circumstance, and it may have some connection with the remark of the Monk, that a serious effort was made in the latter part of the fourteenth century to add to their roll one of the weakest monarchs that ever ruled England. The body of Edward II., after his murder at Berkeley Castle, had been conveyed to Gloucester. There it was buried in the Church of St. Peter. This sovereign, like many other men, seems to have been capable of doing more good by his death than by his life. Numerous miracles were in time reported to have been wrought by his agency. To his tomb pilgrims flocked during the fourteenth century from all parts of England. The monastery to which the church belonged received in this way great additions to its resources. The fame of the wonder-working powers of the dead king spread far and wide. These were so marked as to justify an application to the pope to have him included among the saints. It is certain that an effort to bring about that result was made. The issue rolls of the exchequer show that in the eighteenth year of Richard II. a gold cup, and a gold ring set with ruby, accompanied a present to Pope Urban VI. of a book of the miracles performed by Edward II.[1] A further entry in the same rolls,[2] belonging

[1] Devon's *Issues of the Exchequer*, p. 259. [2] Ib., p. 264.

to the twentieth year of Richard II., records the payment of expenses incurred by the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, who had been sent as an ambassador from the English monarch to the court of Rome to negotiate for the canonization of this same Edward. In this instance the devil's advocate must have had altogether the best of the argument. The murdered monarch certainly never appeared in the list of the saints. Yet it is not impossible that he may have been so entitled in popular speech while these negotiations were going on, and that he was the one whose life the Monk was anxious to relate.

The Norman Conquest, as has just been observed, was not favorable in its effects to the creation of saints out of English rulers. Before that event they were comparatively numerous. One of them, who is mentioned by Chaucer, is Kenelm, the boy-king of Mercia. His death was brought about by the machinations of his sister; that is, provided he ever lived at all, which is doubtful. His name does not appear in the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.' Still, the story of his murder is briefly told by Florence of Worcester under the year 819, and is repeated afterwards, with much addition of marvellous detail, by Matthew of Westminster, Roger of Wendover, and other early chroniclers. But none of these contain even an allusion to the dream to which Chaucer makes a specific reference in the tale of the Nun's Priest. In it Chanticleer the cock relates to the incredulous Dame Partlet the fact of its occurrence. He ends up his account with the statement that the child was too young to pay proper heed to the divine warning

which had been sent him. "And therefore," he continues,

"Little tale hath he told[1]
Of any dream, so holy was his heart;
By God, I haddè liefer than my shirt
That ye had read his legend as have I."

According to the version of the life which has been here drawn upon, Kenelm had a vision which he communicated to his nurse. It seemed to him that before his bed-chamber stood a stately tree, stretching to the very stars and beautiful with spreading branches, which from top to bottom were covered with flowers of all kinds. In addition it blazed with innumerable lamps. On the very summit of it, from which everything could be seen far and wide, he saw himself standing and three parts of the earth bending towards him with profoundest reverence. While he was lost in admiration of this magnificent spectacle, certain of his own kin rushed under the tree and hewed it down. It fell with a mighty fall. But he himself was turned at once into a little white bird, that with unrestricted flight hastened to penetrate the upper air. The nurse was equal to the interpretation of this mysterious dream. Striking her breast, she burst forth into words of lamentation. "Alas, sweetest son!" she cried, "alas the plots of those akin to thee! The malign plots of thy sister and thy governor will prevail against thee. The tree cut down means the loss of thy life; but by the little bird that penetrates the aether is signified that thy soul is to ascend to glory."

[1] Little account hath he made.

It is manifest that in this instance Chaucer as well as Chanticleer had read the legend of Kenelm. A like confidence cannot be felt in all cases, however. The poet's statements in regard to the saints are, at times, marked by that haziness and confusion which occasionally characterizes his knowledge in matters of more importance. In the Summoner's tale we are informed that the life of Saint Thomas of India will furnish satisfactory information in regard to the desirability of the building-up of churches. If Chaucer found any hints upon the subject in any account of the saint's career, he did so in sources that do not appear to have come down to us. A similar assertion can be made of his reference to Archbishop Dunstan. In the Friar's tale the fiend with whom the Summoner enters into conversation, in reciting the privileges and practices of the class to which he belongs, tells his companion, among other things, that

> "Sometimes be we servants unto man,
> As to the archèbishop, Saint Dunstán."

It may not be fair to hold a fiend strictly responsible for the truth of his statements. But in this case Chaucer stands as a sort of sponsor for their accuracy. There is nothing, however, in legendary story that bears out this particular assertion. It was, indeed, the fortune, or misfortune, of Dunstan to be brought into contact with the devil several times, if the lives of him can be trusted which his early biographers produced. But it was only in his capacity of tempter or tormentor that the arch-enemy cultivated the acquaintance of the saint.

He had a way of appearing in various unpleasant forms, such, for instance, as that of a bear, of a dog, of a fox, and of a wolf. The most noted trouble of this sort was, naturally, when he presented himself in the shape of a beautiful woman. The great victory achieved by the holy man on this memorable occasion was one of the favorite stories of the Middle Ages. Greatly to the disgust of serious historians, it has done more to make the name of Archbishop Dunstan familiar to posterity than all his actual achievements. But in no biography that has been transmitted to our times is there any record of his having had a fiend in his service.

The account that has been given includes all the incidents in the lives of the saints to which Chaucer makes any reference. Outside of the lives of Saint Cecilia and Saint Kenelm, there is nothing to prove that he was actually acquainted with any of the written authorities in which these legendary stories were contained. We need not doubt, however, that such was the case with a person of his omnivorous taste. Still, all the passages have been given in which any example of direct obligation to these sources has been shown. With the exception of the Second Nun's tale, they cannot, even when taken all together, be deemed of much importance. Far different is it with another religious work to which we now come.

This is the treatise entitled *De Contemptu Mundi sive de Miseria Conditionis Humanæ*. It was the production of Innocent III. before he became pope. It is in three books, the first of which is devoted to a detailed description of the misery of the human race, the second

to the sins that take possession of the heart, and the third to the torments that are to befall the damned. Modern pessimism has never drawn a gloomier picture of the wretched condition of mankind than was painted by the greatest of the successors of Saint Peter. There was no stage of existence, no estate in society, which was freed from the doom involved in the primal curse that in sorrow man should eat of the fruit of the earth all the days of his life. Every expression of the writer's personal opinion was exemplified by instances drawn from the whole range of Holy Writ, and reinforced by its words. Naked and helpless we entered into a world of misery. The groans which greeted our coming followed hard upon our footsteps during the few and evil days that it was given us to live. Whether in pursuit of pleasure or of profit, everything for which we strove turned out to be only vanity and vexation of spirit, when once within our grasp. All alike were wretched—the rich and the poor, the master and the slave, the married and the unmarried, the good and the bad. Upon all, in various forms, fell the common calamity of cares that burdened the mind, and of griefs that saddened the heart. To execute the final sentence to which every one was condemned, death lay constantly in wait, preceded by its train of agonizing diseases that rack the frame and render the process of dying more dreadful than death itself. After the misery of the life on earth loomed up before us the terror of the life beyond the grave; for the work closes finally with an almost lurid glow of color, in which are depicted all the horrors of the infernal world from which there can be no hope

of escape, the useless repentance of the lost, and the different agonies of the damned.

The work is powerfully written. But it is clear, from the brief account here given of its character, that it cannot well be called cheerful reading. Yet it was for a long time an exceedingly popular production. It colored the tone and views of several English writers who flourished before Chaucer. Echoes of it, for instance, are to be found frequently in Richard Rolle de Hampole's 'Prick of Conscience.' From it, in fact, parts of that production are professedly taken. Attention has more than once been called to the statement made by the poet in the earlier form of the prologue to the 'Legend of Good Women,' that he made a translation of this work into English. The version is generally supposed to have been lost. The doubtfulness of such a view I have previously pointed out.[1] Passages from the discourse on the 'Misery of Human Life' were drawn upon in a loose way by Chaucer, or were in a precise way turned into ryme in certain of his writings. This is notably true of the Man of Law's tale. Of the three hundred and fifty lines which he added to the immediate original of that poem, no small number were taken from this one source. Here, indeed, it is well to specify the precise obligations which he is under to the treatise of Pope Innocent. Four of the five seven-line stanzas of which the proem on the evils of poverty is made up are nothing more than a translation of part of the sixteenth chapter of the first book. This has for

[1] See vol. i., p. 426.

its heading the title *De Miseria Divitis et Pauperis*.[1] The stanza beginning with line 323—

"O sudden wo! that ever art successor"—

is translated directly from the twenty-third chapter of the first book, entitled *De Inopinato Dolore*.[2] The stanza beginning with line 673—

"O messager, fulfilled of drunkenness!"—

is taken from the nineteenth chapter of the second book, entitled *De Ebrietate*.[3] The stanza beginning with line 828—

"O foule lust, O luxury, lo, thine end!"—

is taken from chapter xxi. of this same second book, though portions of it are borrowed from, or rather suggested by, words in other chapters.[4] Finally, the first part of the stanza beginning with line 1037—

"Who lived ever in such delight a day"—

[1] In most of these instances I subjoin the Latin text, as usually it is not easily accessible, save in large libraries. The following is the original of the proem:

"Pauperes enim premuntur inedia, cruciantur ærumna, fame, siti, frigore, nuditate: vilescunt, tabescunt, spernuntur, et confunduntur. O miserabilis mendicantis conditio; et si petit, pudore confunditur, et si non petit, egestate consumitur, sed ut mendicet, necessitate compellitur. Deum causatur iniquum, quod non recte dividat; proximum criminatur malignum quod non plene subveniat. Indignatur, murmurat, imprecatur. Adverte super hoc sententiam Sapientis: Melius est, inquit, mori quam indigere (Eccli. xl.). Etiam proximo suo pauper odiosus erit (Prov. xiv.). Omnes dies pauperis mali, fratres hominis pauperis oderunt eum. Insuper et amici procul recesserunt ab eo (Prov. xix.)."

[2] "Semper enim mundanæ lætitiæ tristitia repentina succedit. Et quod incipit a gaudio, desinit in mœrore. Mundana quippe felicitas multis amaritudinibus est respersa. Noverat hoc qui dixerat: 'Risus dolore miscebitur, et extrema gaudii luctus occupat.' . . . Attende salubre consilium: 'In die bonorum, non immemor sis malorum.'"

[3] "Quid turpius ebrioso? cui fetor in ore, tremor in corpore, qui promittit multa, prodit occulta, cui mens alienatur, facies transformatur? 'Nullum enim secretum ubi regnat ebrietas.'"

[4] "O extrema libidinis turpitudo, quæ non solum mentem effeminat, sed etiam corpus enervat; non solum maculat animam, sed fœdat personam."

is a translation of a sentence in chapter xxii. of book i., entitled *De Brevi Lætitia Hominis*.[1]

Nor are these passages all which Chaucer owes to this treatise. In the Pardoner's tale we meet with its ideas, and sometimes with its language. Much of the discourse delivered by that personage upon gluttony and the appetite is taken from the second book of Innocent's work, especially from the seventeenth chapter *De Gula*. Even the somewhat singular expression, "turnen substance into accident," is nothing but a translation of the phrase *substantiam convertit in accidens*.[2] These comprise the most prominent instances in which Chaucer

[1] "Quis unquam vel unicum diem totum duxit in sua delectatione jucundum, quem in aliqua parte diei reatus conscientiæ, vel impetus iræ, vel motus concupiscentiæ non turbaverit? Quem livor invidiæ vel ardor avaritiæ, vel tumor superbiæ non vexaverit? Quem aliqua jactura, vel offensa, vel passio non commoverit?"

[2] Compare the discourse of the Pardoner on the appetite with the words of Pope Innocent:

"How great labor and cost is thee to find
These cookès, how they stamp and strain and grind,
And turnen substance into accident,
To fulfill all thy likerous talént
Out of the hardè bonès knockè they
The marrow, for they castè nought away
That may go through the gullet soft and swoot.
Of spicery, of leaf, and bark, and root
Shall be his sauce ymakèd by delight,
To make him yet a newer appetite."
Pardoner's tale, lines 75–84.

"Nunc autem gulosis non sufficiunt fructus arborum, non genera legumi-num, non radices herbarum, non pisces maris, non bestiæ terræ, non aves cœli; sed quæruntur pigmenta, comparantur (al. operantur) aromata, nutriuntur altilia, capiuntur ob escam, quæ studiose coquuntur arte coquorum, quæ laute parantur officio ministrorum. Alius contundit et colat, alius confundit et conficit, substantiam convertit in accidens, naturam mutat in artem, ut saturitas transeat in esuriem, ut fastidium revocet appetitum, ad irritandam gulam, non ad sustentandam naturam, non ad necessitatem supplendam, sed ad aviditatem explendam." —*De Contemptu Mundi*, liber i., caput xvii., De Gula.

While these pages are passing through the press I observe that the same results have been reached independently in Germany. The obligations of Chaucer to the treatise of Pope Innocent have been pointed out in an article entitled *Chaucer und Innocenz des Dritten Traktat de Contemptu Mundi, etc.*, contributed to the *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Litteraturen*, vol. 84 (1890), p. 405, by Emil Koeppel. The publication of this independent investigation renders it proper to say that all the details given here were published by me in the *Nation* (N.Y.), No. 1253, for July 4, 1889.

appears to have made use of this particular production. Taken together, however, they occupy a good deal of space. It is not an unreasonable supposition that these scattered versions constitute the translation of which the poet spoke, and that so far as it ever existed at all, it exists now. It is, doubtless, possible that he may have made a prose translation of the whole just as he made a verse translation of a part. This we know that he actually did in the case of the *Consolatio Philosophiæ* of Boethius. The whole of that work he rendered into prose. Portions of it also he turned into verse which was incorporated with his other writings. He may have pursued the same course with the treatise of Pope Innocent. But the fact that in his revised version of the prologue to the 'Legend of Good Women' he withdrew all reference to any translation at all seems to militate against the view that he had ever rendered the work as a whole into English. Be this as it may, there is no question as to his intimate acquaintance with a production the sentiments expressed in which are as absolutely foreign, not to say repugnant, to those of his own nature as anything in the range of literature well could be.

Another religious work of the twelfth century to which Chaucer introduces us is that of a canon of Rheims named Petrus de Riga. The reference to him occurs in an account of the origin of music which is contained in the 'Death of Blanche the Duchess.' The discovery of the art is there attributed to Tubal—by whom is meant Jubal—the son of Lamech. But the person making the statement proceeds to add the following qualification:

"But Greekès sayen Pythagoras,
That he the firstè finder[1] was
Of the art; Aurora telleth so." 1167–1169.

'Aurora' was the title of a Latin poem or series of poems in elegiac and hexameter verse. In it the events recorded in a large portion of the Scriptures were recounted, and in most instances allegorically explained. Though based upon the Bible, there is a good deal of specific information added which the writers of that work had neglected to insert. Petrus de Riga tells us, for instance, that Adam spoke the Hebrew tongue; that he was created in the neighborhood of Damascus; and that the name of Cain's wife was Calmana. The title of 'Aurora' strictly belongs to the beginning of his version of the Bible story. It is from this part that the statement made in the 'Death of Blanche' is taken. In a prologue Petrus de Riga explained the motives that had led him to write his work, and the principles of interpretation by which he had been guided. He wrote, as the later author used to publish, at the urgent entreaty of friends. He wished to penetrate into the hidden meaning of the typical sense, to make clear to the eyes of all the mysteries wrapped in figurative speech. He began by producing a metrical version of the first book of the Bible. In lofty language he gives us his reason for bestowing upon his poem the title he did. Aurora puts an end to the night, and bears witness that the break of day is at hand. In like manner the opening book of the Bible dissipates the darkness of the shades, so that the obscurities of the ancient law may stand forth clear with

[1] Inventor.

the brightness of truth, and resplendent with the gleaming flashes of allegory. "I therefore," he said, "have given it so distinguished a title, for, like as the angel said to Jacob after the mighty struggle, 'Let me go; it is Aurora and the dawn;' so I, after the toil and striving I have put forth in this production, may, after a manner, address my book with the same words, 'Let me go; it is the dawn;' that is to say, I have brought this work to an end because I have explained figures and shadows, and the splendor of truth has visibly begun to shine."[1]

There is a certain occasional poetic vein in this monk of the twelfth century which reminds us at rare intervals of writers of altogether more secular proclivities. But outside the passage which relates to the invention of music, there is perhaps no trace of Chaucer's indebtedness to him either for a fact or an expression. The allegorical character of the poem, however, leads to the consideration of another poem still more purely allegorical. It is mentioned in the tale of the Nun's Priest. This tale, it is to be remarked, is the one of his later pieces in which Chaucer makes the greatest number of references to authors, and exhibits the greatest familiarity with works read at the time. To three of the writings or writers introduced in it he does not make even so much as an allusion elsewhere. One of these is a singular production which is brought to our notice in the following lines:

"Chanticleer so free
Sang merrier than the mermaid in the sea;

[1] All of this work that has been printed, or at least is easily accessible, is to be found in vol. 204 of Migne's *Patrologia Latina*.

For Physiologus saith sikerly,[1]
How that they singen well and merrily." 449–452.

Tyrwhitt supposed this to be a reference to a book in Latin verse entitled *Physiologus de Naturis xii Animalium*, and written by one Theobaldus, whose age is not known. This has been the general statement since his time. There is probably no reason to doubt its correctness. The work itself is a poem of little more than three hundred lines. It is said in the manuscript reprinted by the Early English Text Society to have been composed by the Italian Thetbald.[2] It is one of those bestiaries of the Middle Ages in which fanciful habits were ascribed to animals, and upon these supposed facts wire-drawn and unreal but very tedious allegorical analogies were based, having application to the Christian church and the Christian life. One brief section of the work treats of the sirens. The lines descriptive of them may have been the passage that Chaucer had in view in the statement he made about the mermaids. At the same time, if this be the only work that goes under the name of Physiologus, it must have existed at a comparatively early period. Either it or something of the same character is quoted by Jerome. "Let us read Physiologus," he writes, "and we shall find that the turtle-dove is of this nature, that if it lose its mate, it unites itself with no other; and we shall perceive that second marriage is found worthy of condemnation even by the mute birds."[3]

[1] Certainly.
[2] *Old English Miscellany*, 1872, Appendix i.
[3] *Hieronymus adversus Jovinianum*, book i., chapter 30.

About another one of the three works exclusively mentioned in this same tale there is no uncertainty. A direct reference to a story narrated in it is made in the course of the flattering speech with which the fox is represented as addressing the cock. After paying a high compliment to the excellence displayed by the latter's father in the matter of music, he goes on to pay an additional and even loftier tribute to his wisdom. In the following lines which embody a portion of his praise he takes occasion to compare him with another celebrated cock of whom he has heard:

> "And eke he was of such discretiòn,
> That there nas[1] no man in no regiòn
> That him in song or wisdom mightè pass.
> I have read well in Dan Burnell, the Ass,
> Among his verse, how that there was a cock,
> For that a priestès son gave him a knock
> Upon his leg, while he was young and nice,[2]
> He made him for to lese[3] his benefice.
> But certain there nis[4] no comparisón
> Betwixt the wisdom and discretiòn
> Of your father and of his subtlety." 489–499.

This is a reference to what has justly been styled "the great mediæval satire," *Speculum Stultorum*, or the 'Mirror of Fools.' It was the work of Nigel, usually called Nigellus Wereker, who was precentor in the church of Canterbury during the latter part of the twelfth century. It is an attack upon the follies and faults then prevalent in all classes, but is directed more especially against the regular clergy. The hero of the

[1] Was not. [2] Foolish. [3] Lose. [4] Is not.

poem—if it be right to speak of him as a hero—is an ass called Burnellus. He is dissatisfied with the length of his tail, and is anxious by some means to secure a new one of ampler dimensions. In pursuit of this object he visits the medical school of Salerno. Afterwards he studies for a time at the University of Paris. Both going and coming he has a series of adventures it is not necessary to speak of here; but on the way from Salerno to Paris he falls in with a companion named Arnold, who tells him the story to which Chaucer refers. It is given as an illustration of the fact that there is no one in so abject a position in life that he will not be able, if he wishes it, to return injury for injury. The tale in an abridged form runs somewhat as follows:

The holder of a certain benefice had a son named Gundulf, who in his earlier years exercised a general oversight over the property. He was in the habit of carrying in his hand a rod. One day, in driving away a hen and her brood from the granary, he struck one of the chickens with this weapon. The leg was broken in consequence of the blow. The young cock suffered a long while in body from the injury, but far more in mind from the insult. The former healed in time, but there was no peace to the latter till full atonement had been made for the wrong which had been inflicted. The cock never forgot or forgave the act. He quietly waited, however, his hour for revenge. It came at last. He had reached his sixth year and was occupying his parent's place as chief of the feathered household. As herald of the dawn he regularly announced to the family the coming of day. Gundulf, too, had grown up. To him, after much nego-

tiation, had been promised his father's benefice and the day of consecration, on which he was to receive it, had been fixed. A great feast was held by the happy family the night before the morning on which he was to set out to the city to be installed. As the way was long, it was arranged that he should be waked at early dawn. The cock heard the arrangement that was made, and exulted. The long-wished-for day of vengeance had come at last. When the hour for crowing arrived he accordingly uttered no sound. His wife, who was perched by his side, remonstrated. He rebuked her in genuine marital style as a fool, and she with genuine feminine spite tried to make up for his neglect by crowing herself. It was in vain. Day broke, and the youth had been allowed to sleep over by the attendants, who had full confidence in the accuracy of the cock's knowledge of the hours, and had been deceived by his silence. Gundulf hurried to the city, but it was too late. He had lost his benefice; his parents died of grief, and he himself was turned away from his old home a beggar.

This work furnishes us a vivid conception of ideas and beliefs and practices prevalent in the Middle Ages. Its exact purport might, in some instances, have escaped observation, or at least have been hard to ascertain with certainty. But its author was considerate enough to prefix to the poem a prose preface in which he explained the meaning of his allegory, and made known the object of his attack—a proceeding which might often have been followed with advantage by many writers of satire since his day, and by most writers of allegory. The ass, for illustration, is, according to his account, that member of

the regular clergy who is dissatisfied with his duty in carrying the burden which the Lord has imposed upon him, and therefore, instead of being contented in the cloister, seeks for ampler and more agreeable fields of activity. More interesting on some accounts even than this reference is the notice which Chaucer bestows upon the third one of the group of poems mentioned in the tale of the Nun's Priest. For it does something more than manifest his knowledge of a particular production. It exhibits the critical attitude of his mind. The writer of the work in question is Geoffrey de Vinesauf, who flourished at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century. About him little is known save that he was an Englishman and composed a treatise on the poetic art which was dedicated to Pope Innocent III. It was written in hexameter verse, and consists of about twenty-one hundred lines. In it he set out to instruct his fellow-men in the mysteries of literary composition, not by barren generalities alone, but by pertinent illustrations. His maxims, accordingly, were reinforced by special examples, furnished by himself, of the various methods by which the appropriate thought could be adequately expressed. Two of these specimens have for their subject Richard I. of England. For him the writer seems to have felt unbounded admiration. The first is devoted to eulogizing his greatness. It is a congratulatory address to England while under his rule. Coupled with it is an admonition not to trust in present prosperity, and also a warning of the calamities in store for the land in consequence of his death. In the second the monarch's loss is bewailed and the stu-

dent is shown how grief is to be depicted in the most moving strains.[1] In the course of his lamentations the poet inveighs against Friday, the day of Venus, on which day the king had received his fatal wound. Both of these specimens seem to have taken the fancy of mediæval writers. The latter passage, which consists of little more than sixty lines, is interesting for the evidence it furnishes us that in the thirteenth as well as in the nineteenth century men were found eager to set forth in a wooden way the art of writing, which their own work gave the amplest proof that they did not understand. The subject was one that would appeal to a man of genius, who, like Chaucer, was possessed of the keenest sense of the ridiculous. There can be little doubt that the main reason for his representing as happening on Friday the calamity which in the tale befalls the cock is for the sake of paying his tribute of irreverent respect to this one-eyed leader, who was naturally held in high honor by the blind. It is in the following way that he addresses the great popular expounder of mechanical versification :

> "O Gaufred, dearè master sovereign,
> That when thy worthy king, Richárd, was slain
> With shot, complainedest his death so sore,
> Why nad[2] I now thy sentence and thy lore
> The Friday for to chiden, as did ye—
> For on a Friday soothly slain was he—
> Then would I show you how that I could plain[3]
> For Chanticleerès dread and for his pain." 527–534.

[1] Leyser, *Historia Poetarum et Poematum Medii Ævi*, p. 880–885. The whole poem can be found in Leyser, p. 855 ff.

[2] Had I not.

[3] Lament.

The account of the allegorical treatise on animals mentioned in the tale of the Nun's Priest is a natural introduction to a similar one on minerals. The reference to this occurs in the 'House of Fame.' Chaucer, in describing the hall of the goddess, says that the walls and floor and roof

> "Were set as thick of nouches,
> Full of the finest stonès fair,
> That men read in the Lapidaire." 1350–1352.

Absolute certainty cannot be felt as to the particular work that is here intended. In the Middle Ages there was more than one production that went under the name of *Lapidarius*. Still, it is the common opinion that the poet had in mind the treatise said to be composed by Marbodus, Bishop of Rennes in Brittany, who died about 1124. Its regular title was *De Gemmis*, but it seems popularly to have been styled *Lapidarius*. It is a Latin poem, in hexameter verse, of about seven hundred lines. In it the author treats of sixty precious stones or minerals, gives an account of the places where they are found, of their appearance, and more particularly of their virtues. The latter are much more extraordinary than the remarkable virtues ascribed to plants in the old herbals, and are frequently full as singular as the habits imputed to animals in the bestiaries. The work, therefore, is naturally not a very valuable contribution to mineralogical science. Its interest for us lies mainly in the information it imparts as to what men did not know at that time, and the sort of matter they mistook for knowledge. It is likewise instructive as exhibiting the willingness of the human mind to accept without verification

any statement, however wonderful, which has a voucher for it, however irresponsible. The elder Pliny and Solinus were the two main authorities that were drawn upon for the so-called facts contained in this treatise. Still, while there was a limit to the credulity of these writers, there was none to that of Marbodus. No marvellous story about these precious stones that ancient fable handed down was neglected or doubted. The work, accordingly, can hardly be called a collection of popular beliefs. It is rather a record of the vagaries of the learned, or the fancies of the pious, who wished to press even the stones into the service of religion, and to give them peculiar qualities for the sake of deriving from them a moral lesson. This poem of Marbodus was early turned into French. From the data at our command, it is impossible for us to tell whether the original or the translation was the production of which Chaucer spoke, even if we assume that the work just described was the particular work to which he referred.

Allegorical composition of all kinds was, in fact, a favorite form in which to convey lessons of any sort during the Middle Ages. It was naturally adopted at times by the schoolmen, one of whom we now reach. This was Alain de l'Isle, or Alanus de Insulis, a Cistercian monk of the twelfth century. He held the bishopric of Auxerre from 1151 to 1167, and is stated to have died in 1203 at a very advanced age. He was the author of numerous pieces, and gained, from the extent of his acquirements, the title of Universal Doctor. Two only of his productions are of any interest for the student of literature. But these two are of a good deal of interest,

though not for anything they are in themselves, but for what they have inspired. One of them, made up of mingled prose and verse, is entitled *De Planctu Naturæ*, 'Concerning the Complaint of Nature,' or, as Chaucer renders it, the 'Plaint of Kind.' The work is a general attack upon the vices of the human race, especially those that flow from luxury and licentiousness. Like many early allegorical productions, it takes the shape of a dream. It opens with a portrait of Nature, in which is given a description of the beauty of her person and the splendor of her garments. Upon these latter there is represented a great assembly of the animal creation—of the birds of the air, of the fish of the sea, and of the beasts of the field. It is to this picture that Chaucer makes a direct reference in the 'Parliament of Fowls.' He represents the "noble goddess," Nature, as taking her seat in a forest glade upon a "hill of flowers." He does not attempt to describe her appearance, but says instead,

> "And right as Alain in the Plaint of Kind
> Deviseth Nature in array and face,
> In such array men mighten her there find,
> This noble emperessè full of grace." 316–319.

To this work Chaucer may have owed the suggestion of the characterization of birds which he carried out in this poem. For the details of the characterization itself, he cannot be said to have drawn upon it to any appreciable extent. Occasional words, and perhaps one or two phrases, owe their origin to this source. But when that has been said, all has been said. The birds themselves are not the same throughout in each author.

Where they are the same, the way in which they are described is often widely different. True, there are a few of them about which similar characterization is employed by both writers. In both, the swans sing before their death; the turtle-dove is the emblem of constancy; the owl is the foreteller of coming calamity; the peacock is distinguished for the beauty of its plumage, and the crane for its gigantic size. Details like these, however, belong to no one writer. They were either facts commonly known to all, or the expression of popular beliefs that had been prevalent for centuries. There are also occasional differences to be noted. In Chaucer, for instance, the drake is spoken of as the destroyer of his own kind. In Alain it is the stork that receives that bad distinction. In general it may be said that the enforcement of a moral is something upon which the monkish author always has his eye. In the English poet the aim is solely to depict the actual habits of the birds, or the opinions and superstitions about them that were then current.

This work of Alain de l'Isle consists largely of a dialogue between the author and Nature, after the fashion which Boethius had set in his treatise on the 'Consolation of Philosophy.' The former asks questions, and the latter lectures. It is the evil wrought by unnatural love that is perhaps most bitterly inveighed against; but other vices receive their fair share of attention. Gluttony, in eating and drinking, is made an object of attack. Upon this subject the writer waxes very earnest. He does not spare even the prelacy. Avarice, pride, envy, and flattery are also discussed, and remedies for these

various evils are suggested. Hymen in time makes his appearance, and Nature gives him a place of honor by her right hand. Following him come in succession the virgins Chastity, Temperance, Generosity, and Humility. Nature, after holding a conversation with them all, sends Hymen with a letter to Genius, who serves her in a sacerdotal capacity, summoning him to her presence. He, upon his arrival, proceeds to utter anathemas against those guilty of the vices named, and promulgates against them sentence of excommunication, with curses and punishment appropriate to their individual cases. With this the dreamer awakes from his sleep.

Readers of the *Roman de la Rose* and of Gower's 'Confessio Amantis' will remember the introduction of Genius as acting in a sacerdotal capacity. The creation of this personage with the functions assigned to him may not have been due to Alain; but it is pretty certainly from his work that the character was taken by the French and the English poet. Again, the personification of Nature is not new, though it was perhaps here for the first time made very prominent. She more than once received this distinction at the hands of Statius,[1] to say nothing of other favorite authors of the Middle Ages. But it was more likely from an author with whom he was certainly very familiar that Alain derived the idea of representing her as a divine being. Her character and functions are spécifically defined by Claudian in his description of the garment which Proserpine is making for Ceres. "In this," says the poet, "she marked clearly with her needle the order of the elements and the habi-

[1] *E. g.*, "Magna sinu Natura soluto."—*Thebaid*, viii., 330.

tation of the All-father; by what law Nature, the common mother, calmed ancient discord, whence the seeds of things withdrew to their appropriate homes."[1] This is but one of several references to personified Nature found in the Latin poet, who is often styled the last of the ancients, but might more suitably be termed the first of the moderns; for, while his diction and imagery and illustrations are classical, his ideas belong to the new life that was already fermenting in the veins of the old.

The other work of Alanus to which Chaucer refers has a much closer connection with the Roman writer just mentioned, as its very name indicates unmistakably. It is styled *Anticlaudianus, sive de Officio Viri Boni et Perfecti.* It is a Latin poem in nine books of hexameter verse. It was suggested, and indeed inspired, by the invective of Claudian against Rufinus, the prime-minister, in succession, of Theodosius the Great and of Arcadius. The title is somewhat misleading, for it gives the reader the impression that the views of the Latin poet are to be assailed. The reader of the invective against Rufinus will hardly find justification for such a course. In the beginning of his poem Claudian confesses himself to have been oscillating between two opinions. When, on the one hand, he considers the order and harmony of nature, the regular succession of day and night, the equable movements of the stars, and all the other things which denote the reign of law, he is compelled to believe that there is a creator and governor of the universe. On the other hand, when he sees the long and

[1] *Raptus Proserpinæ*, book i., lines 246–249.

continuous prosperity of the wicked, the evil which falls upon the good, he is shaken in his faith; he is disposed to think that it is not Providence, but chance, that controls the destinies of the world. The calamity that has overtaken Rufinus, however, allays the tumult of his soul, and absolves the gods from blame. He complains no longer because the wicked are raised to the loftiest positions. They are lifted on high that their fall may be the heavier, their ruin more complete.

This is the only passage in his poem which can be regarded as expressing any opinion of Claudian on the moral government of the universe. There is assuredly nothing about it either heathenish or heretical. Accordingly, various explanations have been furnished for the title given by Alanus to his work. The most reasonable one is, that it was not due to difference of sentiment, but to difference of plan. In his invective against Rufinus, Claudian represents Alecto as summoning to a council the inhabitants of the infernal world—the fury passions that prey upon the human heart, the miseries which sadden and pervert the life. To it come Dread, breeder of war; tyrannic Famine; Old Age, bordering upon death; Disease, impatient with itself; Envy, hating the prosperity of others; Grief and Terror; Audacity, rushing headlong with blinded eyes; and Luxury, waster of wealth, followed always by Poverty, with suppliant footsteps, and sleepless Cares, that, moving one after another in long procession, cling close to the breast of their mother, Avarice. These are assembled for the purpose of perverting Rufinus, and making him the representa-

tive of all that is most base and vicious. In the work of Alain, on the contrary, the virtues are called together for the sake of forming a character directly opposite. It is for this reason that the book receives its title. There is no occasion to give any further account of the poem beyond what is necessary to show Chaucer's acquaintance with it. In this work, as in the preceding one, there occurs a personification of Nature. A description of her abiding place is introduced. It is in a plain upon the summit of a lofty mountain. There it is that she is represented as holding a council with the virtues how to form the perfect man. It is in the 'House of Fame' that Chaucer makes a reference to this particular work of Alain de l'Isle. As he is transported in the talons of the eagle he looks down, and sees far below him clouds and mists and tempests. In the account he gives of his sensations he says:

"And then thought I on Marcian,
And eke on Anticlaudian,
That sooth[1] was here[2] descriptiòn
Of all the heavenès regiòn
As far as that I saw the preve,[3]
Therefore I can hem[4] now believe." 985–990.

The reference here is specifically to the fourth book of the *Anticlaudianus*. In it is related how Prudentia, who seems to stand for the human intellect or soul, sets out in a chariot drawn by five horses—that is, by the five senses—with Reason holding the reins, to ascend to the celestial regions. Before she reaches them she is

[1] True. [2] Their. [3] Proof. [4] Them.

compelled to dispense with her charioteer, who becomes confused and mistakes the way. A beautiful maiden, called Theology, comes to her relief, however, and under her guidance she is enabled to reach the empyreal heaven and stand in the presence of God himself. Still, during the first part of her journey under the conduct of Reason, she is enabled from her lofty height to penetrate into many of the mysterious things of nature, detect the causes of cloud and snow and hail and tempests, and see the fallen spirits wandering in the atmosphere—the "airish beasts" of which Chaucer elsewhere speaks in the same poem.

From another work of Alain de l'Isle, Chaucer borrowed a comparison that takes up four lines in the prologue to the tale of the Canon's Yeoman. It is to the effect that all that shines like gold is not gold, and that every apple that is fair to the eye is not, on that account, good. This is a version of a single one of a collection of proverbial expressions that go under the name of *Doctrinale Minus* or *Liber Parabolarum*. The thought is not very recondite, but manuscripts—in this matter, doubtless, representing Chaucer himself—acknowledge the obligation by quoting on the margin a portion of the original. Here, apparently, ceases all indebtedness on the part of the poet to this schoolman of the Middle Ages. The work of the latter has long been forgotten. Nor did it perhaps gain in its own age a wide popularity. In that respect it failed to meet with the success which attended the production of a contemporary author for whom Alain de l'Isle had the poorest of opinions. In the fourth and fifth chapters of the first book

of the *Anticlaudianus* he described the palace of Nature. In it were pictured the works of the great authors of antiquity, and the deeds of its great heroes. The taste of the goddess was catholic, however. Among those represented were some acts and actors that were not praiseworthy, and some writers that were not great. "There," he says, "Mævius, daring to place his dumb mouth to the sky, while he strives to paint the deeds of the Macedonian leader with the imperfect imagery of his obscure song, sticks fast, worn and wearied at the outer threshold, and complains that his spiritless muse has grown dull." This cannot be deemed a complimentary reference to a brother author. Most of us would dislike to be termed a Mævius, even by a Virgil. But to be so termed by one who is himself a Bavius adds to the pain of the wound the indignity of the source from which it proceeds. The person to whom this allusion is generally supposed to have been made is a writer well known in the Middle Ages, and, as is evident from a passage in one of his poems, well known to Chaucer himself.

When the Wife of Bath concludes her account of her fourth husband with a notice of his death, she expresses her opinion of the folly of unnecessary funeral expenses in the following lines:

> "He died when I came from Jerusalem,
> And lieth y-grave[1] under the roodè-beam.[2]
> All[3] is his tombè not so curious[4]
> As was the sepulchre of him Darius,

[1] Buried.
[2] Cross.
[3] Although.
[4] Elaborately constructed.

Which that Apelles wrought full subtilly;
It nis but[1] waste to bury hem[2] preciously."[3] 495–500.

The history of art will be searched in vain for any sepulchre such as is here described. Nor will it record any attempt on the part of the great painter of antiquity to execute a work of this character. The tomb of Darius, which Chaucer mentions, is the creation of the poet so disrespectfully termed Mævius by Alain de l'Isle. His real name appears variously as Philippus Gualterus, Walterus de Cassiolane, Gualtier de Lille, and Gualtier de Chatillon. He flourished in the latter half of the twelfth century. For no small portion of his life he filled the post of secretary to two successive archbishops of Rheims. It was to one of these named William, who was chosen to that position in 1176, that he dedicated an heroic poem in ten books on the deeds of Alexander the Great. Its title was *Alexandris, sive Gesta Alexandri Magni*, and it was founded mainly upon the narrative of Quintus Curtius. It followed the recorded events of history with as much accuracy as it was reasonable to expect in a professed work of the imagination. Still, the author did not allow his efforts to be cramped by too close an adherence to what he found in the record. Occasionally he relieved the monotony of recognized fact by incidents of his own invention. One of these is that referred to in the lines of Chaucer just cited. At the battle of Issus, in 333 B.C., Statira, the wife of Darius, with other members of his family, fell into the hands of Alexander. By him she was treated with the greatest consideration and respect. When,

[1] Is only. [2] Them. [3] Expensively.

about two years afterwards, she died, she was honored by her captor with a splendid funeral. These are perfectly well-known facts. But the poet did not content himself with the simple statements of the historian. According to him, the conqueror built for the wife of Darius a magnificent tomb on the summit of a hill. This was the work of a Jewish artist called Apelles, who was regularly attached to the train of the Macedonian monarch. The sepulchre he erected he adorned with sculptures representing the events of history from the beginning of the world. When Darius in turn met his death, he also was buried by Alexander with great pomp and ceremonial. This is recorded by all historians. But again the poet called in the services of the Jewish sculptor, whose existence he had invented to add another trophy to the achievements of art. The description of the tomb of Darius, which Apelles constructed at the order of Alexander, occupies no small space in the sixth book of this heroic poem. Its shape was that of a lofty pyramid. It was made of white marble, overlaid with gold. Four silver columns, with bases and capitals of gold, sustained a concave arch, upon which were represented the three parts of the terrestrial globe with rivers, forests, mountains, countries, cities, and peoples.

The 'Alexandreid' was a work held in the highest estimation during the Middle Ages. Several instances confirmatory of the respect paid to it are furnished by Warton. He mentions, for one, a Latin anonymous work in which Homer, Lucan, and Gualtier are classed together as the three principal heroic poets. He also points out that in the former half of the thirteenth

century a complaint was made by the archdeacon of Tournay to the effect that the 'Alexandreid' was commonly taught in the rhetorical schools in place of Virgil and Lucan. Of its wide employment in education there can be no question. It consequently did its full share in spreading abroad the name and fame of the hero it celebrated. On the other hand, modern times, by their neglect of this production, may be thought to have endorsed fully the unfavorable estimate entertained of its author by Alain, had they not come to display as much ignorance of Alain himself. One line, in fact, of the 'Alexandreid' still survives in poetical quotation, and is doubtless used by many who have never thought to ascertain its source. In the fifth book, which is largely taken up with an account of the battle of Arbela, the poet apostrophizes Darius after he has determined upon flight. His escape from one enemy to fall into the hands of another he illustrates by what has now become a well-known comparison, which made its first appearance in the following line:

"Incidis in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdim."

This is more than has reached posterity of the voluminous works of the writer of *Anticlaudianus*, who had spoken so contemptuously of his contemporary as Mævius.

It will have been observed that in the passage which was cited a few pages previous from the 'House of Fame,' another author was mentioned in conjunction with Alain de l'Isle. This was Marcian, or, to give him his full name, Martianus Mineus Felix Capella.

There is another place in which a reference is made to him by Chaucer. In the Merchant's tale, in describing the festivities which were celebrated at the marriage of January and May, he turns aside and addresses him in the following lines:

"Hold thou thy peace, thou poet Marcian,
That writest us that ilkè[1] wedding murye[2]
Of her Philology and him Mercúry,
And of the songès that the Muses sung.
Too small is both thy pen and eke thy tongue
For to descriven of[3] this marrìáge,
When tender youth hath wedded stooping age."

488–494.

Martianus Capella was a writer long and widely famous in the Middle Ages, but is as dead to modern apprehension as the schoolman joined with him in the 'House of Fame.' He flourished towards the end of the fifth century. The work by which his name has been handed down was entitled *De Nuptiis Philologiæ et Mercurii.* It consists of mingled prose and verse, and is divided into nine books. The last seven are devoted to unfolding—or perhaps it would be as just to say to wrapping in mystery—what was then known of the seven liberal arts which constituted the trivium and quadrivium of the mediæval course of instruction. One of these books—the eighth, devoted to astronomy—has still for science an historic interest. In it Capella anticipates, after a fashion, some of the conclusions of Copernicus. He laid down the doctrine that the earth was not the centre round which all the planets move. Venus and Mercury revolve about the sun. However familiar Chau-

[1] Same. [2] Merry. [3] Describe.

cer may have been with the work as a whole—and during the Middle Ages it was a sort of manual for purposes of education—it is only to the matter contained in the first two books that he makes any reference. These tell the allegorical story of the wooing and wedding of Philology—a name then used in no restricted sense, but embracing apparently the knowledge of all the arts. Mercury, envying the happiness of the gods whom he sees supplied with consorts, wishes to have a wife for himself. After several disappointments, he at last selects Philology by the advice of Apollo. A solemn council of the gods is held, and their consent is obtained. The second book opens with the announcement to Philology of the elevation to which she is to be raised. Then at her door appear the nine muses, and in turn recite in her honor a song, in each case ending with the refrain that she is to mount to the temple of the sky and take her seat in heaven. These are the songs the muses sang which Chaucer records. Philology is then transported through the region of the air, and, after ascending one hundred and twenty-six thousand stadia, enters the circle of the moon. From that she moves on to the circle of Mercury, and finally to the Milky Way, where Jove is holding an assembly of the gods. After her arrival at her destination, Mercury appears, and the proper arrangements are made for the performance of the marriage ceremony. Among other things that are done, it is noteworthy that the *lex Papia Poppæa* of the time of Augustus Cæsar is duly read. It is the sights that Philology is represented as seeing in this aerial journey, and the things she hears, that

lead Chaucer to mention Marcian in the 'House of Fame.'

This work of Martianus Capella has been described as one of the text-books of the Middle Ages. The mention of it accordingly introduces us to another work which at that time served a similar purpose. In the famous discussion on the value of dreams which in the tale of the Nun's Priest is carried on between Chanticleer the cock and Partlet the hen, the latter sets out to strengthen the contemptuous estimate of them she expresses by citing the testimony of "Daun Catoun," "which that," she adds, "was so wise a man." The cock does not have the lofty opinion of this writer entertained by his wife. He is not in the least staggered by his authority, though he concedes that he has great renown for wisdom. Still, there were others of far greater weight and of far wider reputation than Cato who took ground upon the subject of dreams entirely opposite. In this discussion is the fullest mention made by Chaucer of an author who goes under the name of Cato, or, as he is called in one manuscript, Dionysius Cato. But he is scarcely more than a name. The work was written by nobody knows who, and the writer of it flourished nobody knows when. It bears the title of *De Moribus*, and consists of a series of one hundred and forty-five distichs divided into four books. In it is embodied no small share of the proverbial philosophy of the ancient world. It was first quoted in the latter part of the fourth century. The attention paid to it steadily increased with the progress of time. It came to be held in a respect that fairly bordered upon reverence. In the twelfth century, Walter Mapes, speak-

ing of its reputed author, called Cato the wisest of men since Solomon.[1] Its fame, indeed, extended down to the end of the fifteenth century, and perhaps still later. Caxton published in 1483 a version of it, taken from the French translation. He did it for the avowed reason that, "in my judgment," to use his own words, "it is the best book to be taught to young children in school, and also to the people of every age it is full convenient if it be well understanden."[2] As a manual of education it had, in the Middle Ages, a thoroughly established reputation. John of Salisbury, of whom we shall hear more later, tells us that it was a work in which little children were regularly instructed in the precepts of virtue.[3] To its use as a school-book Chaucer himself bears witness in his Manciple's tale. In inculcating the wisdom of silence he remarks:

> "The firstè virtue, son, if thou wilt lere,[4]
> Is to restrain and keepè well thy tongue;
> Thus learnè children when that they be young."[5]

A statement to the same effect, and partly in the same words, is made in 'Troilus and Cressida.'[6] In neither case is the name of any author or book given; but in both cases the sentiment is taken directly from the first line of the third distich of the first book of the *De Moribus*. This reads as follows:

> "Virtutem primam esse puta compescere linguam."

[1] "Virorum post Salomonem sapientissimus * * Cato."—*De Nugis Curialium*, Distinctio v., cap. 5.

[2] Ames, *Typographical Antiquities*, vol. i., p. 19.

[3] *Polycraticus*, lib. vii., cap. 9.

[4] Learn.

[5] Lines 228–230.

[6] Book iii., lines 292–294.

With a work so common as this, and extending to less than three hundred lines, Chaucer was likely to have been thoroughly familiar from his earliest youth, though the name of the reputed author he was probably accustomed to hear in its French form of Caton. That, at least, is the one he himself uses. He embodies another bit of wisdom from it in the Merchant's tale in the satirical praise he is bestowing upon the married state. The first line of the twenty-fourth distich of the third book,

"Uxoris linguam, si frugi est, ferre memento,"

he renders in the following words:

"Suffer thy wifès tongue, as Caton bit."[1] 133.

The advice, indeed, he makes more general than the original authorizes; for, as is seen, it is there coupled with a condition that she be virtuous. The Canon's Yeoman also quotes expressly from this work a sentiment to the effect that every man that is guilty suspects everything that is said to be said of him personally. This is taken from the seventeenth distich of the first book. It is the beginning of the thirty-first distich of the second book that furnishes the advice—*ne cures somnia*—which is quoted in the tale of the Nun's Priest.

This comprises everything that Chaucer takes from this particular work. It is, however, important to add here that it went some time under the name of *Cato Magnus*, to distinguish it from a supplementary collec-

[1] Bids.

tion of the same character, which received, in consequence and by comparison, the name of *Cato Parvus*.[1] The latter is attributed to a man whose name was Daniel Church, or, as it appears in the Latinized form, Danielus Ecclesiensis. He flourished towards the end of the twelfth century, and is described as belonging to the household of Henry II. To the original work he added a few introductory Latin precepts. The two collections seem often to have been joined together after that period, and he who translated the one was very apt to translate the other. This was true, for instance, of Lydgate. Chaucer was familiar with the supplementary work, though he may not have been aware that it had a different authorship from the original one. He certainly quotes a passage from it as if it were the composition attributed to Dionysius Cato. In the Miller's tale the marriage of an old man to a young woman is condemned. Of this folly the carpenter, one of the characters in the story, had been guilty. This was due in part to his ignorance, for, as the poet tells us,

> "He knew not Cato—for his wit was rude—
> That bad man shouldè wed his similitude." 42.

While this advice is eminently sound, it is not advice that finds a place among the moral distichs, the composition of which goes back at least to the fourth century. Tyrwhitt was the first to notice its occurrence in the supplementary collection of proverbs which was the work of the writer of the twelfth century. He quotes it under the title of *Facetus*.

[1] This work I have never seen.

These writers of the twelfth century are, indeed, the ones who predominate in Chaucer's reading. There is still another of them to whom we can trace some slight indebtedness upon his part. This is John of Salisbury. He flourished during the reign of Henry II. As secretary to Becket, he took no inconspicuous part in the stormy struggles that went on between church and state during the reign of that monarch. He was made bishop of Chartres in 1176, and died in 1180. Many years before his death he finished his most famous production, a Latin prose work in eight books, entitled *Polycraticus, sive de Nugis Curialium et Vestigiis Philosophorum.* In this he discussed the follies and vices of the age, and numerous questions connected with public and private morals and with science and philosophy. It was a work widely read and much admired during the Middle Ages. Chaucer was certainly acquainted with it, though any direct indebtedness on his part does not extend apparently beyond the opening chapters of its first book. From one of these, which treats of the use and abuse of dice, he seems to have derived two of the stories upon the subject of gaming which are contained in the moral discourse the Pardoner delivers at the beginning of his tale. One of them, as told in the *Polycraticus*, is related of the Lacedæmonian Chilon, who was sent as ambassador to Corinth. In Chaucer, however, his name appears as Stilbon. The other is of a somewhat indefinite king called Demetrius, to whom the Parthian monarch contemptuously presented a pair of dice. Apart from these two stories, and a couplet in the same tale to the effect that hazard is the very mother of lies, deceit,

and perjuries,'[1] I cannot find anything that can be said to be derived certainly from the *Polycraticus*.

There are, indeed, many things included in this work which occur also in Chaucer. In the fourth chapter of the first book Chiron is represented as the instructor of the youthful Achilles on the lyre and the cithara. In the 'House of Fame' this same Centaur is given a place among the musicians.[2] There is, again, in the *Polycraticus* a discourse on dreams and their significations;[3] the story of the death of Cleopatra;[4] an attack on the mercenary character of some of the clergy;[5] and a denunciation of gluttony.[6] All these have their counterparts in the poet's productions. In not one of them, however, is there any evidence that coincidence implies obligation. In fact, there are instances in which we know that the same sentiments have come from a different source, and that the particular indebtedness which Chaucer has been represented as being under to this work is utterly devoid of truth. Speght, as an illustration, declared that from it was taken the statement in the 'Death of Blanche'[7] that Attalus was the first inventor of the game of chess. His note to this effect has been often repeated. But in the *Polycraticus* Attalus is represented as the inventor not of chess, but of dice-playing.[8] Chaucer's words, indeed, come directly from the *Roman de la Rose*,[9] though the assertion of Jean de Meung was suggested by what he found in the work of John of

[1] Lines 129, 130. "Mendaciorum siquidem et perjuriorum mater est alea."—*Polycraticus*, lib. i., cap. 5.
[2] Line 1206.
[3] Lib. ii., cap. 16.
[4] Lib. iii., cap. 10.
[5] Lib. viii., cap. 17.
[6] Lib. viii., cap. 6.
[7] Line 663.
[8] Lib. i., cap. 5.
[9] Line 7428 (Michel).

Salisbury. Francis Thynne was probably the authority for Speght's statement. It did not make its appearance till the second edition of 1602, to which that antiquary made some contributions. At any rate, it is to Thynne we owe the further charge that the poet borrowed from the eighth book of the *Polycraticus* "word for word a great part of the Wife of Bath's prologue." This is absolutely incorrect. Certain things are common to the two, for they came from the same production. This was the treatise of Jerome against Jovinian, of which a description has already been given. It is the discourse of Theophrastus on marriage which Chaucer versified in this prologue, and which John of Salisbury also embodied in his own work. It is to this invective that we are now naturally led.

In the literature of the Middle Ages it cannot be truthfully maintained that many admiring tributes are paid to woman as woman. Not only did men write all the books that were written, but the men who wrote books belonged, with few exceptions, to the clerical order. As members of the clerical order were not permitted to marry, they naturally felt disposed to console themselves for the privilege that was denied them by dwelling with special stress upon the miseries they had escaped. The female sex, accordingly, did not meet with much favorable mention at their hands. To bring damaging charges of all sorts against it became largely a literary fashion. The argument for the assumed superiority of celibacy was sought to be strengthened by malicious charges against the sex whose attractions proved a most potent agency to make men unwilling to

enter upon this theoretically higher life. The honorable state of matrimony may have been honorable, as it was depicted by the monkish writers, but it was anything but agreeable. The Wife of Bath, who had ideas of her own upon the matter, naturally resented the depreciatory estimate of her sex that pervaded this literature. She is reminded of the lion in a fable who sees a picture of one of his kind vanquished by a man, and his sarcastic comment upon the different position in which the parties would have been represented as standing to each other had the execution of the painting been intrusted to a lion instead of a man. It is in these words that she describes the sort of justice that was to be expected in the portraiture of the character of women as it was drawn by ascetics who knew nothing whatever of them in the closest relations of life:

"For, trusteth well, it is an impossíble
That any clerk will speakè good of wivès—
But-if[1] it be of holy saintès livès—
Ne of none other woman, never the mo.
Who painted the lión? Tell me who.
By God, if women haddè written stories,
As clerkès have, within hire[2] oratories,
They would have written of men more wickedness
Than all the mark[3] of Adam may redress." 688–696.

It is in these lines that Chaucer described the spirit that pervaded the writings of the men of the Middle Ages whenever there was occasion to make any sort of reference to women. It can therefore be well under-

[1] Unless. [2] Their. [3] Children.

stood with what pleasure an attack upon them was received which came from the pen of Theophrastus, the most famous of the disciples of Aristotle. The work in which it was contained is now lost; but a fragment of it, in a Latin translation, has been preserved in the treatise which Jerome wrote against Jovinian. There it constitutes the main portion of the forty-seventh chapter of the first book. It is introduced as taken from a production which he styles *Aureolus Theophrasti Liber de Nuptiis*. The part which he quoted is devoted to a discussion of the question whether it was expedient for a wise man to marry. As may readily be inferred, the reasons why he should not are urged with vigor, or, as it may more appropriately be said, with venom. The sentiments expressed in this piece made it an especial favorite with the writers who belonged to the clerical order. Echoes of it abound everywhere. Not unfrequently its ideas, and even its very words, are embodied in works which have little apparent connection with the subject it discusses. Much of it, for instance, is found in the treatise of Innocent III. on the 'Contempt of the World.'[1] By Chaucer it is reproduced nearly in its entirety. In the ironical praise bestowed upon matrimony at the beginning of the Merchant's tale, Theophrastus is cited as taking a gloomy view of that estate. Some of his disparaging words, as preserved by Jerome, are versified.[2] The sentiments contained in them are duly scouted, however, in the following lines:

[1] *De Contemptu Mundi*, lib. i., cap. 18, 'De Miseria Continentis et Conjugati.'

[2] *Merchant's tale*, lines 49–62.

"This sentence, and a hundred thingès worse,
Writeth this man, there God his bonès curse!
But take no keep[1] of all such vanity;
Defyeth Theophrast and harkè me." 63–66.

In the Manciple's tale also there is derived from this piece the comment made by the narrator upon the needlessness of espionage upon a woman really chaste, and the uselessness of it upon one who is at heart unchaste.[2] But it is the Wife of Bath that furnishes the fullest view of the sentiments of Theophrastus in the speeches which she represents herself as having addressed to her husbands.[3] Interspersed as they are with much other matter, the groundwork consists of the ideas of the heathen philosopher which had received the sanction of the Christian father.

In the mention of the works in which her scholar husband delighted, the first place, it will be remembered, was assigned by the Wife of Bath to this book and another.[4] He was represented as calling them collectively 'Valery and Theophrast.' Though apparently spoken of as one, they are essentially two distinct treatises. But inasmuch as they were bound together by the unity of a common subject, and were pervaded by a common spirit, it is not unlikely that they were often joined together and considered as parts of one and the same work. It is natural to infer, indeed, that in late manuscripts the so-called 'Valery' was included with the 'Theophrastus' among the productions of Saint Jerome.

[1] Heed.
[2] *Manciple's tale*, lines 43–59.
[3] Prologue to the *Wife of Bath's tale*, lines 235–378.
[4] Ib., line 671. See page 289 of this volume.

It is said, at any rate, to have been contained in the early printed editions. The one treatise undoubtedly inspired the composition of the other. Of this latter the full title is *Valerius ad Rufinum de non Ducenda Uxore.* It was the work of Walter Mapes, who in 1196 became archdeacon of Oxford. He is, on the whole, the most famous man of letters that England produced in the twelfth century, though his works were all composed in other languages than that of his own country. To him is ascribed, among other productions of the Arthurian cycle, the romance of 'Lancelot of the Lake.' To this last-named piece Chaucer refers in the tale of the Nun's Priest, though it is, perhaps, not possible to decide whether the poet had in mind the French original or some English version. Mapes assures us that he himself wrote the work which is called 'Valery' by the Wife of Bath. He tells us, in addition, how he came to write it. He had a friend, a man of philosophic life, whom he found after a while to be undergoing an entire alteration of character. He had lost his joyousness, he shunned society, and exhibited a total change in his manner and behavior. He said that he was ill. Mapes saw that he was in love. The latter, however, thought it merely a passing folly. In process of time he discovered that it was cruel earnest.[1] His friend was not only in love, he was actually determined to perpetrate matrimony. As when he spoke to him on the matter he was repulsed, he took the resolution of writing him a letter in order to dissuade him from rushing madly into destruction. This he did, and exhausted his eloquence in setting forth in gloomy col-

[1] "Sævum serium" is Mapes's phrase.

ors the miseries attending the married state. In this piece Mapes, whose Christian name was Walter, called himself Valerius, and to his friend who was called John he gave the name of Rufinus. His epistle met with much favor. Copies of it were speedily scattered abroad, and it was read, as he informs us, with eagerness and pleasure. But as in the course of time many denied it to be his composition, he included in it his treatise *De Nugis Curialium*, and detailed the circumstances under which it was written.[1]

With the so-called 'Valery' Chaucer was undoubtedly familiar, though there is some difference in the proper names as they appear in the original and in the incidents taken from it which are found in his own production. In the epistle of Mapes it is a man named Pacuvius who tells his friend Arrius of his unhappiness in that there was a tree in his garden upon which three of his wives had hanged themselves in succession. In Chaucer it is Latumius[2] who meets with this misfortune and who is earnestly entreated by Arrius to furnish him with grafts from that same blessed tree which he can plant in his own garden.[3] From this tractate appears also to be taken the story of Lyma, who destroyed her husband because she hated him, and of Lucia, who brought about a similar result for hers because she loved him.[4] Chaucer's Lyma must be a scribal error for Livia, who, at the instance of Sejanus, poisoned her husband, Drusus, the son of the

[1] *De Nugis Curialium*, Distinctio iv., cap. 2, 3. ero *De Oratore*. It is there told of a certain Sicilian and his friend; but one wife is represented as hanging herself, and not three.

[2] Prologue to *Wife of Bath's tale*, lines 757–764.

[3] This anecdote appears also in chap. 69 of the second book of Cic-

[4] Prologue to *Wife of Bath's tale*, lines 747–756.

Emperor Tiberius. Lucia, and the fatal love-philter which she caused to be brewed in the hope of reviving the affection of her lord, have been made familiar to modern readers in Tennyson's poem of 'Lucretius.' These seem to be the only things that are taken directly from the work of Mapes, though there is much in it besides that can be found also in Chaucer's writings.

Woman occupies an important place in a poem to which we now come; but it is a part altogether different from that she plays in the diatribes against matrimony which were so dear to the clerical writers of the Middle Ages. In the course of the description which the Franklin gives in his tale of the sufferings of Aurelius for the love of Dorigen, and of the necessity he lay under of hiding it from the world, he says:

> "Under his breast he bare it more secree
> Than e'er did Pamphilus for Galatee." 382.

We have here a reference to two of the characters in a popular production of the Middle Ages, which appears often under the title of *Pamphilus de Amore*, or *Pamphilus sive de Arte Amandi*. It is written in the form of a dialogue, or a series of dialogues, and consists of seven hundred and eighty lines of elegiac verse. As regards its subject, it is one of that class of works produced in the Middle Ages which owe their inspiration to Ovid. It opens with a soliloquy. In this Pamphilus, the hero, recounts his secret love for a maiden, who, as he subsequently says, is higher than himself in station, and, what is still worse, is possessed of greater wealth. In his anxiety and uncertainty as to what course to follow, he

appeals to Venus for aid. To her he relates his sad situation. The goddess gives him some good advice about the proper method of making himself agreeable to the one he loves, with some general reflections upon the necessity of boldness in dealing with women. This counsel does not yield him much satisfaction at the time. Still, the conduct he finally adopts furnishes convincing evidence that the hints about the advantages that result from audacity have sunk deep into his mind. Then ensues a conversation between him and Galatea, in which he declares for the first time his love. From her he receives some slight encouragement. But as he feels the need of more effective agencies than he himself can employ, he betakes himself to an old woman whom he persuades to act the part of a go-between. This character, much the best drawn in the piece, acts her part most effectually. The rest of the poem is taken up with a dialogue between her and Pamphilus, between her and Galatea, and with the devices she employs to bring about a secret interview between the two lovers, to be followed by a marriage. An assurance from her that this must follow concludes the work. This piece, for many reasons, deserved the favor in which it was held, at least if we compare it with most of the productions that were then popular. Its authorship is unknown. The writer to whom it has been sometimes assigned is nothing but the shadow of a name.[1] The date of its composition is likewise unknown with certainty, though there is little

[1] By Ebert (*Allgemeines Bibliographisches Lexikon*, Band ii., 298) it is, however, attributed with much probability to Pamphilus Maurilianus, a poet of the thirteenth century.

reason to doubt that it belongs to the twelfth or the thirteenth century. The line in the soliloquy of Pamphilus with which it opens—

"Vulneror et clausum porto sub pectore telum"—

is cited on the margin of the Ellesmere manuscript. It is to this beginning of the work, describing the misery of the lover, that the passage in the Franklin's tale refers. There is nothing else in Chaucer's writings, so far as I have observed, that can be deemed to contain even so much as an allusion to this poem.

The invective of Theophrastus against marriage was embodied, as has been said, by John of Salisbury in his *Polycraticus*. This led to the charge that it was from that work that Chaucer had borrowed part of the prologue to the Wife of Bath's tale. It is an instance in which the knowledge of the poet was superior to that of his commentator. It is not at all unlikely that statements made by the writer of the present chapter may be shown to have furnished several additional illustrations of the same fact. Full as uncertain are some of the poet's obligations to another author who was a contemporary of John of Salisbury. In the margin of some manuscripts there is written against the following line in the tale of the Nun's Priest—

"God wot that worldly joy is soon ago"—

the name of Petrus Comestor. The allusion to him in the text cannot be deemed very respectful. It is proof, however, that Chaucer had enough acquaintance with the writer to demand that some notice should be taken of the man and his works. He was a native of Troyes,

in Champagne, and occupied a high position among the learned men of the twelfth century. The name of Comestor, or 'the eater,' was given him, not because he consumed more food than other people, but because he devoured more books. His great work, the *Historia Scholastica*, was held for a long time in the highest repute in the department of religious literature. It was a collection of narratives of the principal events of the Bible, with the addition of a good deal of commentary, containing much doctrinal and likewise no small quantity of legendary and fabulous matter. The work began with Genesis and ran regularly through the books of the Old Testament till Chronicles were finished. Then it took up some of the remaining books from the same source and from the Apocrypha. Passing on to the New Testament, it devoted a good deal of space to the life of Christ as told in the four gospels. With the Acts of the Apostles it concluded. Chaucer had certainly some acquaintance with the author and his work, if the marginal references which usually appear in the best manuscripts are due to him originally. At the same time, this appears to be the only certain place in which there is any allusion to anything that Peter Comestor had written.

There is, however, another passage which is supposed by some to contain a reference to the work. Among the evil deeds recited by the Pardoner in his tale as having resulted from excess in eating and drinking, he specifies the beheading of John the Baptist by Herod. The example is introduced with the implication that it would be known to him "whoso well the stories sought," or,

as it appears in some manuscripts, "the story." This has been said to be a plain reference to the *Historia Scholastica*. The evidence in favor of the view is not very strong. Peter Comestor tells the story of the beheading of John far more briefly than Matthew or Mark. He makes not the slightest allusion to the evil of drunkenness. As a matter of fact, he does not even imply its existence. So far from his describing the act of Herod as being the result of temporary excess, he actually insinuates that the murder had been arranged beforehand, and that the whole proceeding was a device to furnish the king with a pretext for putting the Baptist to death. He is certainly too much interested in discussing the nature of the dish on which John's head was brought to the table, and the fortunes that befell his bones after his death, to spend any thought in deducing a moral lesson from the crime. It is practically impossible, however, in cases like this, to decide with certainty whether Chaucer was referring to the work of Peter Comestor, or to that of some one else, or to the Bible itself. In the monastic writings 'story' is a term often applied to the Scripture narratives. It is natural that the custom of so designating them should have come to be generally followed. Chaucer, for illustration, in celebrating in the Merchant's tale the merit of women, introduces one of his examples with the words,

> "Lo, Judith, as the story tellen can."

Here the line may refer to the *Historia Scholastica*, which relates, though briefly, the story of Judith. It seems much more natural, however, to look upon the

reference as made by the poet to the apocryphal book which goes under her name.

But the fame of Peter Comestor as a devourer of books fades away before that of another scholar who is mentioned by Chaucer. In the course of the defence of the female sex which appears in the prologue to the 'Legend of Good Women,' we find in the first version the following lines:

> "What saith also the epistles of Ovíd
> Of truè wivès and of hire laboúr?
> What Vincent in his Storial Mirroúr?"

This is the only place in Chaucer's writings in which Vincent of Beauvais is spoken of by name. He was a Dominican friar. Unlike most of the modern Latin authors familiar to the poet, he belonged to the thirteenth century and not to the twelfth. He wrote several works; but all of them, either printed or still in manuscript, sink into insignificance, even if taken together, when placed side by side with one in particular, which in these degenerate days inspires a certain awe by its magnitude, even if it excite neither interest nor admiration by its contents. It bears the title of *Speculum Majus*, or, as it is sometimes called, *Bibliotheca Mundi*. The work is one of those feats of honest but stupid industry in which laborious dulness delights. It belongs to that class of productions which set out to embody in portable shape all the knowledge that exists on all subjects. It is probably the most complete and most famous of the kind which the Middle Ages brought into being. In its preparation more than five hundred authors or treatises were laid under con-

tribution, for Vincent had access to the royal library of Saint Louis. Contemporaries bore witness to the immensity of his reading. But the voluminous compilation which he left behind has rendered their testimony superfluous. In this work the author intended, as he himself tells us, to bring together and give a general view of everything in the world that is worthy of contemplation, admiration, or imitation, whether it were visible or invisible. In its pages, therefore, was embraced, in theory at least, all the knowledge that was then known, which, of course, included a great deal that has never been, and never can be, known. For the iron of accuracy rarely entered at that time into the soul of the scholar. It never made him falter in setting down without examination any fact which he chanced to meet, or in repeating any story that happened to be current. His business was not to weigh and verify, but to gather together and to heap up. In this Vincent certainly succeeded. His work, in the uncritical age in which it appeared, soon came to be a standard authority. Such it long remained. Many manuscripts of it are still in existence, and by the end of the fifteenth century about half a dozen editions of it had been printed.

The *Speculum Majus* is divided into three parts, termed respectively the *Speculum Naturale*, the *Speculum Doctrinale*, and the *Speculum Historiale*. To these was early added a fourth part, entitled the *Speculum Morale*, which many, and perhaps most, scholars regard as a spurious addition of the beginning of the fourteenth century. The general plan of the *Speculum Naturale* was determined by the six days of creation as recorded

in Genesis. Its various parts were devoted, in consequence, to the consideration of the Creator and the beings of the supernatural world; to meteorology, to botany, to astronomy; to an account of birds, fishes, terrestrial animals, and finally to man himself. The *Speculum Doctrinale* embraced the circle of human learning, and the arts which bear on the conduct of life. In it are treatises on grammar, logic, architecture, alchemy, medicine, physics, and metaphysics. This enumeration by no means exhausts the list. The *Speculum Historiale*—the 'Storial Mirrour,' as Chaucer translates it—is a so-called history of the world from the creation down to the pontificate of Innocent IV., which began in 1243. Its pretensions as a history are of the slightest. The account of events is not so much mingled with as it is overwhelmed by an immense mass of extraneous matter. Naturally, everything connected with the rise and progress of the Roman church receives the fullest attention. Secular events, indeed, have a very poor show when once an opportunity presents itself to the author to enlarge upon the lives and miracles of the saints, and the duties and obligations of the religious life.

The aid of figures can properly be called in to give some idea of the scale upon which the *Speculum Majus* is executed. Its three parts are divided into eighty books, and in these eighty books are contained nine thousand nine hundred and eighty-five chapters of varying length, but averaging perhaps five hundred words apiece. It is gratifying to learn from the author himself that while some misguided critics had charged him

with intolerable prolixity, others had full as unjustly reproached him for his excessive brevity. In view of the existence of this latter class of persons, it would be presumption to maintain that there have not been men who have read the whole work in course. But while this is conceivable, it is hardly conceivable that they did it for pleasure. For the contents are neither interesting nor instructive. Vincent of Beauvais, in spite of, or perhaps in consequence of, his indefatigable industry, may properly be termed an author of thickness rather than of solidity. Even for his time it was heavy work that he accomplished, not in any sense great work. The *Speculum Majus* is, in truth, little else than a huge, undigested compilation of facts and statements from all sorts of authors, writing on all sorts of subjects. These are quoted, as far as possible, in the very words of the original. It partakes more of the nature of a scrap-book than of an encyclopædia. This is true, at least, of the *Speculum Historiale*. The value of the compilation now consists mainly in the view which it gives us of the writers and writings to which a student of the thirteenth century would have access, at whose disposal had been placed the literary collections possessed by Louis IX. of France. It is worthy of note, therefore, that while several books of the *Speculum Historiale* are taken up, nominally at least, with the history of Rome, the compiler of the history made no use of the works of either Livy or Tacitus, nor does he even seem to be aware of their existence.

As the *Speculum Majus* treated of everything that was talked about or written about in Chaucer's days,

it was unavoidable that many of the incidents he mentions should appear also in this work. The choicest specimens, for illustration, of the abusive phrases applied by Saint Jerome to Jovinian personally were carefully culled out and presented in a condensed form in the seventy-fifth chapter of the sixteenth book of the *Speculum Historiale*. Even the remarks of Theophrastus on the inconveniences and disadvantages of marriage to the sage turn up in the fifth and sixth chapters of the sixth book of the *Speculum Doctrinale*. But coincidences such as these establish nothing. With the exception of the direct reference to Vincent of Beauvais which has been quoted, there has so far nothing been traced to him or his works save the following passage in the tale of the Wife of Bath:

> " Poverte is hateful good, and as I guess,
> A full great bringer-out of business ;[1]
> A great amender eke of sapience
> To him that taketh it in patience.
> Poverte is this, although it seem elenge,[2]
> Possession that no wight will challenge." 339–344.

This, Tyrwhitt pointed out, was partly taken from the seventy-first chapter of the tenth book of the *Speculum Historiale*. In this chapter and the one preceding, an account is given of an interview which is said to have taken place at Athens between the Emperor Hadrian and a philosopher named Secundus. The philosopher had formed the resolution to preserve unbroken silence. In consequence, he would say nothing in reply to his sovereign. This Pythagorean vow he could neither be

[1] Care, anxiety. [2] Strange.

induced to break, nor even compelled when death stared him in the face as a result of his refusal. But though Secundus would not talk, he was willing to write. With him, therefore, Hadrian had a conversation on paper. The emperor put to him a series of questions, such as, What is the world, what is the ocean, what the sun, the moon, the earth? what is man, what is woman, what is beauty? and a number of queries of the like magnificently vague character. The replies were of the same general nature as the inquiries. The censorious reader will be disposed to think that the philosopher displayed a good deal of wisdom in saying nothing where he clearly had nothing to say, and would have displayed his wisdom still more if he had refrained from committing himself in writing. In answer to the question, What is woman? he begins with the phrase *Hominis confusio.* Readers of the tale of the Nun's Priest will remember that Chanticleer quotes this in conversation with Partlet his wife, and adds for her benefit a remarkable translation. The definition given in reply to the question, What is poverty? is that it is a hateful good, the mother of health, the removal of anxieties, the inventress of wisdom, occupation without injury, possession without calumny, happiness without care. This undoubtedly suggested to Chaucer certain of the phrases which are contained in the lines that have been cited. There may possibly be other passages in this bewildering compilation which will be found to have given the poet other hints or facts. A close comparison of the two, however, would be almost an endless, and very likely a fruitless, labor. It is to be added,

finally, that the doubtful if not spurious *Speculum Morale*—itself a work of portentous magnitude—contains a great deal upon the very matters which form the subject of the Parson's tale.

One other author there is who belongs to the early part of this same thirteenth century of whose writings Chaucer made some use. This is Albricus Philosophus, who is described as a Londoner. Still, no dictionary of English biography contains his name or gives the slightest account of his life. The work by which he is known —if he can strictly be said to be known at all—is a treatise entitled *De Deorum Imaginibus*. It consists of a series of sketches of the heathen gods and goddesses, and of a few other mythological personages, such as Orpheus, Hercules, and Perseus. The manner in which they are depicted in art is the matter with which the writer concerns himself chiefly, though he is not confined to that subject. The work has one great merit. It is very short. There are but twenty-three sections in all, and only one of them—that which gives an account of the twelve labors of Hercules—extends beyond a few lines. Obligations to this little book on the part of Chaucer can be traced in the 'House of Fame' and in the Knight's tale. To it are due particulars in the description of Venus in both of these poems, and in the latter particulars in the description of Mars and perhaps of Mercury. They are not numerous, nor are they very important. Some of them have also undergone modifications by which they assuredly lose nothing. The war-god, in the account of Albricus, is portrayed as attended by a wolf

carrying a sheep. The far more vivid picture in the Knight's tale is the poet's own, so far at least as this author is concerned.[1] From this same source may have come the representation of the "winged god Mercury," as he appears to Arcite, with the "sleepy wand" he carried in his hand, and with the head-covering he wore. To the account of Æolus in the same work, Chaucer also seems indebted for the two trumpets with which in the 'House of Fame' that god is furnished, though the uses to which these instruments are applied are altogether different.[2]

This may not have been the whole of the work of Albricus. It is possible that the merit of brevity which has been accorded him is, after all, not his. In the bibliographies the production is furnished with a title which represents it as treating of the origin of the gods as well as of their representation in art.[3] The one single extract from it which I have ever chanced to meet in any early author credits it, in fact, with some statements that are not to be found in the printed editions. This extract is to be found in a ponderous work entitled *De Causa Dei*.[4] It was the production of a man who

[1] "A wolf there stood before him at his feet,
With eyen red, and of a man he eat."
Lines 1189, 1190.

[2] The work of Albricus is contained in Van Staveren's *Auctores Mythographi Latini*. As the representation of Mercury does not appear to have attracted attention, I quote the following sentences from it: "In manu autem sua læva virgam tenebat, quæ virtutem habebat soporiferam. * * * Galerum quoque seu umbellam capite portabat." With these compare the *Knight's tale*, lines 529, 530. It is fair to add that the description could also have been taken from the following passage in Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinæ*, i., 77, 78:

"Cyllenius astitit ales,
Somniferam quatiens virgam, tectusque galero."

It is also found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, i., 671, 672. The passage in which the two trumpets are assigned to Æolus reads as follows in Albricus: "In manu autem utraque tenebat cornua: quæ ori admovens, ea subflare, et ab unoquoque cornuum sex ventos emittere videbatur."

[3] Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Mediæ et Infimæ Latinitatis*, vol. i., p. 138.

[4] See Sir Henry Savile's edition, p. 157.

belonged to Chaucer's own century. His name was Thomas Bradwardine. He died in 1349 of the black death, just after having been made archbishop of Canterbury. In the tale of the Nun's Priest, he is mentioned in conjunction with Boethius and Augustine as foremost in the discussion of the doctrine of God's foreknowledge and man's free-will. He is entitled to such a position by mass of matter, if not by weight of argument. The numerical estimate which has been applied to the production of Vincent of Beauvais is the only one that he who is not profoundly interested in the doctrines of speculative theology will appreciate in the consideration of the work of this author. The treatise *De Causa Dei* was printed at London in 1618 by Sir Henry Savile, with a life of Bradwardine prefixed. In that edition it covers eight hundred and seventy-six folio pages, with more than eight hundred words to a page. The whole work, therefore, consists of more than seven hundred thousand words. Such a treatise the modern theologian, interested in its subject, may speak of with respect. As a general rule, however, it is not one that even he reads. If Chaucer did it, we are prepared to understand the necessity he lay under of hurrying home from his official duties and poring over his books till his eyes were almost dazed. This defence of predestination and attack upon Pelagianism, which earned for its author the title of the Profound Doctor, the poet may have mastered thoroughly. The fact certainly cannot be disputed with safety by one of the present pusillanimous race of men who has hardly had the courage to turn over its pages.

Mention has already been made of another author of the thirteenth century. This was Albertano of Brescia. He was a civilian, and experienced the fate that overtook many of those who concerned themselves with the political, which were also the military, struggles of the Italian states. In 1238, upon the capture of his native city by the Emperor Frederick II., he was thrown into prison. In this enforced solitude he composed three treatises in Latin. One of them—the *Liber Consolationis et Consilii*—became, as we have seen, through the medium of the French translation, the source of the tale of Melibeus.[1] Tyrwhitt had pointed out the resemblances between some of the sentences in this prose narrative and the Merchant's tale. A later scholar has made it exceedingly probable that Chaucer was acquainted with the work not only in the French version, but in the Latin original. He has shown with certainty the poet's familiarity with another treatise of Albertano —the one entitled *Liber de Amore et Dilectione Dei et Proximi et aliarum Rerum et de Forma Vitæ*. Of this considerable use was made in the Merchant's tale, and passages from it are cited on the margins of the two best manuscripts of the Six-text edition. With the third production of Albertano—*De Arte Loquendi et Tacendi*—Chaucer was probably familiar, though the evidence is not so strong in this case as in the preceding.[2]

There remain to be mentioned two authors who flourished at widely different dates. With one of them Chau-

[1] See page 211.

[2] See *Chaucer und Albertanus Brixiensis*, by Emil Koeppel, in *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Litteraturen*, vol. 86 (1891), pp. 29–46. It is from this article that I have derived all the essential facts here given.

cer was certainly acquainted; with the other he may have been. On the margin of many manuscripts of the Man of Law's tale are four Latin lines. These are given as the source of certain statements contained in two of the stanzas to the effect that the fortunes of men are foretold by the stars long before the men themselves are born. Tyrwhitt pointed out that the lines came from a work of a poet and philosopher of the twelfth century called Bernardus Silvestris or Bernardus Carnotensis. His work is described as made up of mingled verse and prose. It is divided into two parts, one called *Megacosmos*, the other *Microcosmos*. The whole is a treatise on man, philosophy, and theology. It does not seem to have been sufficiently popular at the time of the invention of printing to have caused a demand that it should be put in type. Nor has it since received that tribute to its interest or value. It is in the first part that the lines used by Chaucer are found. No adaptation of any other portion of this production has been pointed out elsewhere. The fact itself, however, can only be determined with certainty by those who have access to the manuscript or manuscripts in which the work is contained.

The other writer with whose acquaintance the poet has been credited is one much better known. He is Paulus Diaconus, the historian of the Lombards, who flourished in the latter half of the eighth century. He himself is never mentioned by Chaucer, nor is the work which he certainly wrote. But Paulus Diaconus stands commonly as the reputed author of a Roman history, the so-called *Historia Miscella*, which was compiled by

various writers from various sources. This work has been cited by one of the poet's editors as the apparent source of the account of the death of Attila which is given in the Pardoner's tale.[1] Acquaintance with this particular compilation Chaucer may well have had. It was an established authority in his time. The first part of it embodies essentially the Roman history of Eutropius, with additions and modifications. To it the poet may have owed his acquaintance with some of the facts for his knowledge of which other productions have been held responsible. From it he could well have taken everything connected with the story of Lucretia that did not appear in Ovid. It is possible, indeed, that he was led by it to ascribe to Æneas two sons instead of one. In the *Historia Miscella* the reign of the Trojan leader over the Latins is followed by this account of the succession:

"Quo vita decedente regnum suscepit Ascanius, qui et Iulus, ejusdem filius, quem apud Trojam ex Creusa conjuge filia Priami regis genuerat, et secum in Italiam veniens adduxerat."

It is not a difficult matter for a hasty reader to mistake the meaning of this confusedly expressed passage. Were we absolutely certain that Chaucer was familiar with the work from which it was taken, it would be natural to infer that from it he was led into the error which is found in the 'House of Fame' of making Ascanius and Iulus two distinct persons.

[1] See Bell's *Chaucer*, vol. iii., p. 77. The passage there quoted is said to be taken from the fifteenth book of the *Gesta Romanorum*. It is not contained in the copy of the *Historia Miscella* to which I have had access.

The survey that has now been taken includes all writings of a literary or semi-literary character knowledge of which has been professed by the poet, or has been imputed to him by others. For statements that in one or two instances are made he cites an authority with which there is no necessity of supposing him familiar at first hand. These, accordingly, it has not been thought advisable to speak of at length, or even to particularize. For illustration, in the 'Legend of Good Women' he says:

> "But I ne clepe not innocence folly,
> Ne false pity, for virtue is the mean,
> As Ethic saith." 164–166.

It is reasonable to assume that here Ethic denotes the 'Nicomachean Ethics' of Aristotle, in which the doctrine is laid down that the nature of virtue consists in its being the mean between two extremes. It is, however, the doctrine so regularly attributed to that work that the statement of it is very far from implying that there is any knowledge of the source from which it is primarily derived, beyond its title. From the list given have accordingly been excluded a certain number of authors besides Aristotle — such as Homer, Plato, Josephus, and others—whose names occur in Chaucer's writings. With what they wrote, however, there is nothing to warrant the belief that he was acquainted. He may have been familiar with some of them in translations or paraphrases. Homer, for instance, represents often in the Middle Ages a poem in Latin hexameters, which went sometimes also under the name of Pindarus The-

banus.[1] It contained an epitome of the story of the Iliad. But of any of the works written originally in the Greek tongue, there seems to be no evidence that Chaucer possessed the slightest knowledge. From this list are, too, necessarily excluded the writers or writings that are mentioned in that portion of his production which consists itself of translation. Had the names which there appear been added, the number of authorities would have been largely increased. The tale of Melibeus, for illustration, while drawing upon Seneca, Dionysius Cato, Cicero, Ovid, Augustine, Jerome, Innocent III., and Pamphilus, and upon some of them drawing largely, contains citations also from Petrus Alphonsus, Cassiodorus, and Saint Gregory. In the Parson's tale—which in no proper sense can have been original—are quoted, in addition to those elsewhere named, Isidore and Damasus. Again, the passage ascribed to Saint Ambrose in the Second Nun's tale, interrupting as it does the narrative, we know to have been taken from the Latin original.

In the reference to Saint Bernard—evidently to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux—at the beginning of this same poem, there is a possibility that Chaucer was writing from actual knowledge of some of his productions. He speaks of the fondness of the saint for celebrating the Virgin Mary. It is apparently his own assertion, and not a translation of the words of another. Whether his by origin or adoption, there is no question as to the truth of the fact stated. There are several of Bernard's homilies—fully a score of them, indeed—that are essen-

[1] Fabricius, *Bibliotheca*, etc., vol. v., p. 875.

tially and even professedly panegyrics upon the Virgin. Among his hymns also there is an impassioned orison to Christ and to the Mother of Christ. It may have suggested one or two of the epithets that are employed by Chaucer in the tale just mentioned. Stronger evidence might be adduced for his knowledge of a treatise ascribed to Bernard and entitled *Tractatus ad Laudem Gloriosæ Virginis Matris*.[1] But constant uncertainty attends any affirmation of his acquaintance with a single one of these productions. Such is not the case, however, with his knowledge of one work of which no special mention has been made in the list given of those with which he was assuredly familiar. This is the Bible. With it he would necessarily have become familiar in a thousand ways. That fact could be assumed, even did his writings themselves furnish no evidence upon the point. But upon the point their evidence is overwhelming. His references to passages and persons in both the Old and the New Testament as well as in the Apocrypha are so frequent and abundant that they would require for their full exhibition a special chapter.

There remains now the consideration of the position which the poet occupied in relation to the science, or the so-called science, of his day. Whether the belief be true or false, the student of Chaucer comes to entertain the conviction that here he was distinctly in advance of most of his contemporaries. His words lead us to think that his knowledge, so far as it went, stood on surer and firm-

[1] Compare, for illustration, Chaucer's "flemed wretch" and "unworthy son of Eve" in this poem with passages like "Respice ergo, beatissima Virgo, ad nos proscriptos in exsilio filios Evæ" of the *Tractate*. See Bernard's works, vol. i., p. 1148, in Migne's *Patrologia*, vol. 182.

er ground than theirs. In particular he leaves upon the mind the impression that he had a far sounder perception than they of the nature of what was true and false in the evidence upon which scientific conclusions are based. It is certain that he was keenly alive to ideas that were in the air, to be sure, but were rarely put into words, and then only by those who were the most advanced thinkers of the time. His acceptance of certain doctrines and rejection of others will be noticed elsewhere. In a general way it may be said that views opposed to the common belief, or unknown to it, crop up not infrequently in his pages. It is clear that in the line in the Franklin's tale—

> "This widè world, which that men say is round"[1]—

he is recording not merely the assertion of others, but an opinion of his own—an opinion undoubtedly shared by some of his contemporaries. I am too little acquainted with the history of scientific theories either to affirm or deny that the doctrine of transmission of sound by waves of air, so fully expounded in the 'House of Fame,' was one generally received in his time. Most of the science of the Middle Ages that has any foundation of fact is apt to be traced back to Aristotle—a fate which sometimes overtakes modern discoveries. In this particular instance we know that the one illustration upon which the poet relies he took from the treatise of Boethius on 'Music.' But whether the existence of sound waves was then recognized or not as the correct theory, to the poet must be given the credit of compre-

[1] Line 500.

hending the doctrine clearly and stating it sharply. His description, again, of the habits and characteristics of birds and of the uses of trees is in some cases the reflection of current beliefs, in other cases the reproduction of what he has read. In several instances, however, it is clearly the result of original and intelligent observation of his own.

When we come to the literature of science, or of what went under its name, it is not so easy to pronounce a definite opinion upon his attainments. There are certain authors of whom he speaks but whom he has clearly not read. Some of them, indeed, he is careful to tell us he knows only by reputation. In the Squire's tale he mentions in one place Alocen, that is Alhazen, an Arabian astronomer of the eleventh century, and Vitulon, that is Vitellio, a Polish mathematician of the thirteenth. To these he adds the name of Aristotle. It is their writings upon optics and perspective of which he is discoursing. But he does not profess to be acquainted with them himself, for he continues,

> "As knowen they that have hire bookès heard." 227.

On the other hand, with certain of the authors and authorities belonging to the so-called science of alchemy he must have had some actual acquaintance. He shows his knowledge of them, indeed, by his assertion that he was utterly unable to understand what they said. He could not have furnished much stronger evidence that he had read their works. The more an intelligent person familiarizes himself with these productions, the more muddled his mind becomes. Four of the author-

ities that the alchemists held in estimation he expressly mentions in the tale of the Canon's Yeoman. One of them was Hermes Trismegistus. To this fabled prophet, priest, and king of early Egypt, who was invented by the first opponents of Christianity as the father of all human knowledge, were attributed numerous works composed at various times. Some of these, which, though produced during the Middle Ages, bore his name, treated of the philosopher's stone and of the making of gold. They fully justified their claim to inspiration and antiquity so far as it rests upon incomprehensibility.[1] Another was the *Secreta Secretorum* — the "Secree of Secrees," as Chaucer rendered it—which was ascribed to Aristotle. It was, as Tyrwhitt tells us, a most popular work during the Middle Ages. He who wishes to have a general idea of its character and contents will gain it most easily from reading the seventh book of Gower's 'Confessio Amantis.' An attentive perusal of that will obviate the necessity of reading the original, and will usually deprive one of the desire. The story told of Plato and his disciple in this same tale of the Canon's Yeoman is taken, as Chaucer himself says, from a book called 'Senior,' though he has substituted the Greek philosopher for the Solomon of the original.[2] The treatise is extant. Of the first two of these three productions the actual authors are not known. Of the writer of the fourth work

[1] See Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Græca*, lib. i., cap. 7–12 inclusive.

[2] Fabricius gives the title *Senioris Zadith filii Hamuelis Tabula Chymica*. It was perhaps a translation from the Arabic, and was first printed at Frankfort in 1608. The work referred to was first pointed out by Speght, in his Annotations and Corrections to the edition of 1598. In these he corrected the *Semor* of the printed editions, including his own, into *Senior*.

—the *Rosarium Philosophorum*—we have some definite information. His name is Arnoldus Villanovanus, or, as it appears in Chaucer, "Arnold of the New Town." He flourished in the latter half of the thirteenth century, and is described by the bibliographer Fabricius as a poet, physician, and philosopher, skilled in chemistry, suspected of magic, hostile to the friars, and on that account more than suspected of heresy.[1]

Purely technical work would not be likely to be known to Chaucer save by name. It is hardly to be supposed that he spent much time in reading medical treatises, though curiosity may have led him in some cases to the examination of a particular work. In the prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales' he gives a list of the writers of his profession with whom the Doctor of Physic was well acquainted. It begins with Æsculapius. The productions of that particular practitioner it would have been difficult to find in any age of the world. But just as there were alchemical treatises that went under the name of Hermes, so during the Middle Ages there were medical ones that went under the name of Æsculapius. One of these Chaucer may have had in view. Still, his list, as found in the general prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales,' is nothing more than an expansion of a similar one in the *Roman de la Rose*.[2] Hippocrates, Galen, Razis, Avicen, and Constantin are the authors that are common to both. The works of two of these the poet quotes specifically elsewhere. In the Merchant's tale

[1] Vol. i., p. 358. Fabricius says, singularly enough, that he practised medicine at Barcelona about 1480.

[2] *Roman de la Rose*, lines 16,895–16,897 (Michel).

there is a reference to a particular treatise of Dan Constantin[1]—"the cursed monk," as Chaucer styles him—who belonged to the eleventh century. With its character the poet was clearly acquainted, if not with its contents. Constantius Afer was a Benedictine monk of Monte Cassino. He was a native of Carthage, and became one of the founders of the famous medical school of Salerno. Much better known is the Arabian Avicenna, who flourished in the early part of the eleventh century, and received the surname of Prince of Physicians. His fame in Western Europe was based almost entirely upon his great work, the 'Canon of Medicine.' Chaucer shows his lack of intimate acquaintance with this production by the manner in which he refers to it. The 'Canon' was divided into books and sections, and the sections were in the Latin version denoted by *fen*, from the Arabic *fanu*, "a part of any science." The poet seems to regard the *fen* as a work independent of the 'Canon,' to the subdivisions of which it gave the name. That certainly is the natural inference from the following language he uses in the account, in the Pardoner's tale, of the death of the two murderers who had themselves taken poison unawares:

> "But, certes, I suppose that Avicen
> Wrote never in no Canon n' in no Fen
> Mo wonder signès of empoisoníng,
> Than had these wretches two ere hire endíng."[2]
>
> 427–430.

Of the medical science of any age it can be said more

[1] Line 566.

[2] See Skeat's *Man of Law's tale*, etc., 2d edition, p. 164. To it I am indebted for all that is material in what is said above about Avicenna.

truly than of any other science that its learning is without knowledge. Familiarity with much of the literature of the healing art of that time would be of little service at any time in teaching the art to heal. The case was different with astronomy. In that the theories might be wrong and the methods defective; but it had, nevertheless, a solid substratum of positive fact and recorded observation upon which to build. As it was much the nearest to what in modern times would be called a science, so Chaucer's interest in it was much greater than in any of the subjects that then went under that name. His knowledge of it, so far as it existed, must have been respectable, if it does not deserve a much loftier epithet. With the system of judicial astrology which was connected with it, he was equally familiar, though he took care to express an almost contemptuous disbelief in its pretensions. There are but few of his poems in which some knowledge of the positions and relation to each other of the stars is not involved, or in which some reference to their influence is not contained. Accordingly, he could hardly have failed to gain a certain acquaintance with the great astronomer and geographer of the second century who has given his name to the theory of the universe and of the movements of the heavenly bodies that was accepted before as well as after his time. The only one of Ptolemy's writings mentioned by him is his principal one, the *Syntaxis*. This, then as now, was far better known by its hybrid Arabic-Greek name of 'Almagest.' Of it he speaks in the beginning of the Miller's tale. It forms part of the library of the clerk, Nicholas, who

"had learned art," but whose tastes were all directed to the study of astrology. In manuscripts, on the margin of the tale of the Man of Law, there is also inserted against the verse beginning with the line,

"O firstè moving cruel firmament!" 197.

a quotation taken from the seventh chapter of the first book of the Latin translation of the 'Almagest.'[1] The author of the work is also mentioned by name in the treatise on the Astrolabe. At the end of the Summoner's tale he appears in conjunction with Euclid as a representative of special scientific acquirements. All this makes somewhat perplexing the references to the same writer and work in the prologue to the tale of the Wife of Bath. Of these there are two. In both instances a proverbial philosophy, very much in the style of Dionysius Cato, is expressed. The first of them reads as follows:

"Whoso that nill beware by other men,
By him shall other men corrected be;
The same wordès writeth Ptolemy;
Read it in his Almagest and take it there." 180–184.

Tyrwhitt, who took the trouble to search, was unable to read this sentiment in the 'Almagest,' or to find anything like it. Nor was he more successful with the second quotation, which the Wife of Bath purported to take from the same work. This is contained in the following lines:

"Of allè men y-blessèd mote be he,
The wise astrologien, Dan Ptolemy,

[1] The manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* have on their margins chapter 8, or chapter g, which means 7. The latter is correct.

That saith this proverb in his Almagest;
Of allè men his wisdom is highést
That recketh never who hath the world in hand.
By this proverbè thou shalt understand,
Have thou[1] enough, what thar[2] thee reck or care
How merrily that other folkès fare." 323–330.

Where Tyrwhitt failed, others can feel safe in excusing themselves from seeking the proverbial pearls of this nature that may be lying concealed in the thirteen books which make up the 'Almagest.' But it is no easy matter to suggest an adequate motive for their assignment to the work, unless Chaucer actually supposed that they were there. This is, itself, something hard to reconcile with the knowledge he displays of it elsewhere, or at any rate displays about it.

Far more convincing evidence of his acquaintance with the literature of the science is the book he left unfinished on the 'Astrolabe.' It is essentially a translation of the treatise of Messahala on the same subject. Messahala was an Arabian astronomer of the eighth century. Many of his productions had become familiar to Western Europe in Latin versions. Of these, that on the construction and operation of the astrolabe was one. From it Chaucer drew, according to Professor Skeat, the latest editor of the work, fully two thirds of what he himself wrote on the subject. That Messahala was the original the poet followed in this instance was pointed out long ago by Selden in his prefatory remarks to Drayton's 'Polyolbion.' In the neglect that overtook both the 'Polyolbion' and this astronomical treatise of

[1] If thou have. [2] Need.

Chaucer, Selden's observation seems to have escaped attention. He, however, appeared to suppose that it was Messahala's work in the original Arabic upon which Chaucer drew directly. It is, in his view, one of the illustrations of the poet's learning, far "transcending the common road." There is another Arabic astronomer mentioned and quoted in this treatise of the 'Astrolabe.' He is there called Alkabucius. According to Warton his name is Abdilazi Alchabitius, and the work in question is an introduction to judicial astrology.

There is, besides, an astrological treatise to which Chaucer is slightly indebted, though he gives no hint of the source to which the indebtedness is due. This is the work called *Tetrabiblos*—probably from its being in four books—which admirers of the astronomer Ptolemy reluctantly include among his writings. It is mainly devoted to the consideration of the influence which the heavenly bodies have on the lives and fortunes of men. From the tenth chapter of the third book is taken a brief statement in the 'Astrolabe' as to the position in which a planet is to be reckoned in the ascendant.[1] These references are sufficient to show that anything remotely relating to this, his favorite science, recommended itself to the poet's attention. Of his acquaintance with the purely technical aids to its study there is satisfactory though unneeded proof. In the Franklin's tale he mentions the "tables Tolletanes." These were the astronomical tables prepared in the thirteenth century by the command of Alphonso X. of Castile. They

[1] Pointed out and quoted by Mr. Brae in his edition of the *Astrolabe*, p. 36.

frequently received the name here given them from having been adapted to the city of Toledo. The calendars of the "reverend clerks," the two friars, John Somer and Nicholas Lynne, are both mentioned in the prologue to the treatise on the 'Astrolabe.' They were to be used, as we are informed, in the preparation of the third part, which was never completed, and doubtless never even undertaken. These calendars still exist in manuscript. One of them is valuable to this extent, that it furnishes corroborative evidence for the determination of the date of this work. Somer's calendar was calculated for one hundred and forty years from 1367, and that of Lynne for seventy-six years from 1387. With the whole literature of his science, indeed, there is little reason to doubt that Chaucer had made himself familiar, so far as knowledge of it was essential to his own purposes.

We cannot leave the subject of the poet's learning without taking notice of what must strike all as a most singular list of names. It is that of authors of whom we should never have heard, had they not been mentioned by Chaucer himself. As they rise before us, a number of perplexing questions arise with them. Did these writers ever have a real existence? Was their creation due to a blunder of the pen? Were they the outcome of the wild work that the scribes made in the transcription of proper nouns? Or, on the other hand, was their creation due to an error of the poet himself? Did he mistake the name which the copyist possibly signed to the manuscript of the work for the name of the author of the work? Or was the mention of them due to a desire on his part to mystify the reader, and give to others

an impression of his own wide learning? Or is it our ignorance that presumes an author to have had no existence because his existence is unknown to us? Were these writers, admired by their own generation and read by succeeding ones, to have time at last, in his heedless march, leave of them hardly so much as the shadow of a name? Or do the works they produced still lurk unnoticed or forgotten in the collections of mediæval libraries? To these various questions no answer can be made with absolute certainty, though to some it can be with every degree of probability. The most that will be attempted here is to bring together the references made by Chaucer to the writings of these men, and any facts that exist which may tend to throw light upon who they were, or at least upon who they were not. The writers to be considered are but four in number. They will be taken up in alphabetical order. There are, indeed, others mentioned by the poet equally unknown, such as Tropula and Chrysippus in the prologue to the Wife of Bath's tale. But these four are the only ones from whom he professed to derive specific statements. They are therefore the only ones of whose possible identification in the future there is much prospect.

The first upon the list is Agathon. He is mentioned in the prologue to the 'Legend of Good Women.' There he is made responsible for the statement that Jupiter raised Alcestis to a place among the constellations. These are Chaucer's words:

"And is this good Alceste,
The dáìsý and mine own heartès rest?

Now feel I well the goodness of this wife,
That[1] both after her death and in her life,
Her[1] greatè bounty doubleth her renown.
Well hath she quit me mine affectiòn
That I have to her flower, the dáisy.
No wonder is though Jove her stellify,[2]
As telleth Agaton, for her goodness." 518–526.

The old editors disposed of this author without any difficulty. "A philosopher of Samos," said Speght, "did write histories." In this account he was followed by Urry. Tyrwhitt, who was never the man to pretend to know where he did not know, frankly confessed his ignorance. "I have nothing to say concerning this writer," he remarked, "except that one of the same name is quoted in the prologue to the tragedy of 'Cambyses' by Thomas Preston." In that place Agathon is mentioned as having laid down three rules by which princes should regulate their life and conduct. Obviously this has no connection with what Chaucer represented him as saying. The classical dictionaries do not help us more than did Tyrwhitt. Three authors named Agatho have come down to us from antiquity. One is a tragic poet of Athens, belonging to the fifth century before Christ; the second a geographical writer of Samos; the third a theologian living at Constantinople in the seventh century of the Christian era. The writings of all of these were in a language which Chaucer could not have read. Of the first two also the works have disappeared. But the name of the tragic poet occurs several times in ancient authors, and is mentioned by Dante in the *Purgatorio*. It was

[1] That—her = whose.

[2] Place among the constellation

for this reason that Cary, in his translation, advanced the opinion that he was the writer who was meant by Chaucer. The view was based upon the assumption that if Agatho's works were not familiar to the Middle Ages, his name at least was. Sandras, who had a fancy for displaying an acquaintance with the lost works of unknown authors, went still further. He suggested that the English poet might have had in hand a Latin translation of Plato's 'Banquet.' The scene of that is laid in the house of Agatho, the tragic poet. In the conversation that takes place he himself bears a part. In that work, also, there are two passages mentioning Alcestis, though in neither instance are the references to her put in the mouth of the host. Moreover, there is nothing said in them, or in any part of the whole treatise, that so much as alludes to her having received a place among the constellations. The attempt to identify the Agathon of Chaucer with this particular author cannot be deemed successful, or in the least warranted by any knowledge now in our possession. According to the English poet, there is a definite statement made by the former about Alcestis. Nothing of that kind can be found in anything ascribed to or asserted of the latter. We are still compelled to repeat Tyrwhitt's declaration of ignorance as to who is meant by Agathon.

The next person on the list is a woman. At least, such is the inference from her name. The poem of 'Queen Anelida and False Arcite' Chaucer professes to have derived from two authors. If we are to take literally the statement which he makes at the opening of the piece, we must regard the production as a translation,

and that the original was a work but little known. There is certainly no other interpretation that can well be put upon the following lines:

"For it full deep is sunken in my mind,
With piteous heart in English for to endite
This oldè story, in Latin which I find,
Of queen Anelida and false Arcite,
That eldè, which that all can frete[1] and bite,
As it hath freten many a noble story,
Hath nigh devourèd out of our memóry."

As a matter of fact, the statement about this old story being found in a Latin author is an adaptation of a similar statement in the *Teseide* of Boccaccio.[2] This, however, does not explain the origin of the story itself, which is not taken from that source. The work in which it originally appeared—whatever it was—has never been discovered. In the closing invocation to the Muses, Chaucer ends with a prayer that they may be favorable to his undertaking,

"And do[3] that I my ship to haven win,
First follow I Stace and after him Corinne."

The Muses, as we know, were not favorable, and Chaucer's ship never reached its haven. Had it succeeded in doing so, it might perhaps have furnished us with full information as to the sources of this story. But the obligations to Statius are not only easy to be seen, the manuscripts call attention to them by inserting some lines from the twelfth book of the 'Thebaid' to indicate the particular passage he had in view. This we can assume

[1] Devour. [2] *Teseide*, i., 2. [3] Cause.

to be Chaucer's own acknowledgment. But after we leave the preliminary matter taken from the Roman author we come to the story of 'Anelida and Arcite.' That, if we can trust the poet, owed its inspiration, if not its details, to Corinne. And why should we not trust him? He has followed one of the authorities he names to our certain knowledge. What reasonable ground is there for doubting his statement about the other? But, in that case, who was Corinne? She could not have been the contemporary of Pindar who, in addition to her other productions, wrote a work entitled 'The Seven against Thebes.' Her writings cannot be supposed to have lasted till the fourteenth century; and if they had, Chaucer could certainly never have read them. Yet it seems incredible, under the circumstances, that the poet should not have had some particular person in view who bore the name. There is, indeed, an epic poet named Corinnus, who has lately been set up as the author who was followed by him, or rather as the one whose name was borrowed. This writer is reported to have flourished at the time of the Trojan war, and to have furnished Homer himself with the argument of the Iliad. It scarcely needs to be said that there is no ground whatever for connecting him or his name with this poem. The vague, if not mythical, being called Corinnus lives for us only in the pages of the lexicon which is attributed to a somewhat mythical compiler called Suidas. It is more than doubtful if he ever lived at all. Chaucer was not more likely to be more fortunate in hearing about him than modern students who must go to special biographical dictionaries to find even his name. In ad-

dition to this, the works, which were probably never written, of this author, who probably never existed, were concerned with the Trojans, and not with the Thebans.

It is, however, about the next name on the list that the greatest interest lies, as well as the greatest perplexity. This is the author whom Chaucer styles Lollius. He is certainly the most tantalizing personage in this shadowy company of writers who may have once flourished, and still continue to hover, ghostlike, about the pages of the poet, but vanish into vacancy as soon as an attempt is made to scan closely their features. The mystery connected with Lollius, in particular, is deepened rather than dispersed by his occasional identification with Boccaccio. It is only in a negative way that modern investigation has added anything to our information about him. That, however, is something. If we cannot say who he was, we can at least have the satisfaction of saying who he was not. This it is incumbent to do before stating the conditions the problem presents. It is, therefore, to be declared at the outset that the Lollius of Chaucer is not Lollius of Urbino. The latter, however, more fortunate than some who have been held up as the poet's authorities, did have an actual existence, and did produce a book. All that is known about him can be told in a very few words. Julius Capitolinus, one of the writers of the so-called Augustan history, mentions in his life of Antoninus Pius that the Britons were conquered during the reign of that emperor by his general, Lollius Urbicus. Here Lollius is a soldier. But a man of the same name, and presumably the same man, appears also as a writer. At least, Lollius Urbicus is cited as an

authority by Ælius Lampridius, another of the composers of this same Augustan history. We are told that he wrote an account of his own times, though nothing has ever been heard of him or it beyond these two brief references. He is the one, however, who was adopted as the remote original authority for 'Troilus and Cressida.' This historian, who is to us only a name, and even with whose name there is no reason to suppose Chaucer acquainted, has been persistently spoken of as the source from which the English poet drew much of his material. It was Speght who first introduced him to the English reader. In the glossary to the edition of 1598 he describes him as "an Italian historiographer, born in the city of Urbino." This statement was repeated and amplified with much learning in the glossary to Urry's edition. Still further repute was given to him as an author from whom Chaucer borrowed his material by the half endorsement that Warton gave to the assertion. "Chaucer's poem of Troilus and Cresseide," he wrote, "is said to be formed on an old history, written by Lollius, a native of Urbino in Italy." He did not affirm this, but, on the other hand, he did not deny it. He was careful, to be sure, to say in a note that this Latin historian of the third century could not be Chaucer's Lollius. But as he neglected to add that there was no evidence that any other author of that name was known to have had an existence, the note naturally did not destroy the impression conveyed by the remark found in the text. Nor was Tyrwhitt's later disclaimer, of his inability to solve the problem the name presents, sufficient to deter men from repeating the current assertion. Lollius of Urbino had,

by Warton's inadvertence, got a footing in all histories of English poetry. There he continued to remain. For nearly a hundred years a mysterious entity, dubbed with that title, haunted our literature in connection with Chaucer. Belief in him, as in other ghosts, has, however, gradually died out. Like them, he appears of late only to those in whose knowledge or judgment we are not apt to place confidence. With this account of his origin and history he can now be dismissed to the obscurity from which there was never any reason that he should have been dragged.

The disappearance of Lollius of Urbino removes one stumbling-block in the way of investigation; but it does not assist investigation directly. Who is the Lollius of Chaucer? What information about him does the poet himself give? His name occurs three times in his writings. He is mentioned in the 'House of Fame' as one of the writers of the Trojan story. Besides this, his name occurs twice in 'Troilus and Cressida' as the author whom Chaucer professes to have followed in the composition of that work.[1] As this poem was unquestionably founded upon the *Filostrato*, such an acknowledgment might seem at first glance to settle the question. Boccaccio must be the person meant, whatever may have been the reason for bestowing upon him this particular name. Unfortunately, the very mention of Lollius adds to the difficulty, instead of removing it. One passage in the fifth book, for which he is quoted as an authority, is taken directly from the *Filostrato*.[2] But the other and more important reference occurs in the first book. It

[1] See pages 225 and 234–236 of this volume.

[2] Lines 1646 ff.

introduces the love-song of Troilus, which Chaucer professes to give with exactness, both as regards the words and sense,

"As writ mine author callèd Lollius." 394.

But the original of this song is not found in Boccaccio. It is, as already observed, a translation of the eighty-eighth of the sonnets of Petrarch.

As if Chaucer himself had not made the matter sufficiently obscure, Lydgate now comes along to darken it still further; for it is the unfortunate peculiarity of this question that every additional item of information about it increases the mystery attending it. In the list which he gives of the poet's writings, he informs us that Chaucer made in his youth a translation of a book which in the Lombard tongue is called Trophe, and that before his death he gave it the name of 'Troilus and Cressida.' The *Filostrato* is not known to have ever borne the title of Trophe, and outside of this passage no mention has been made of any work that goes under that name. We are certainly not helped, therefore, if we are not hindered, by Lydgate's information. Another mystery has been added to what was already sufficiently mysterious. The word Trophe further appears in Chaucer himself as apparently the name of a man. In the account of Hercules, given in the Monk's tale, we are told that he set up pillars at the ends of the world, "as saith Trophe." Against this line on the margin of some of the very best manuscripts appears this note: *Ille vates Chaldeorum Tropheus.* It is presumably from the pen of the poet himself. But we are as ignorant of any Chaldean seer

named Tropheus as the Chaldean seer himself would have been ignorant of the exploits of Hercules. Whichever way we turn we are met by a puzzle apparently inexplicable, and what might naturally be expected to unravel serves still further to confuse.

So far, no explanation in the slightest degree satisfactory has ever been proposed of the name of Lollius, or how or why Chaucer came to use it. There have been plenty of them, however, such as they are. The one that has met with most favor is that of Latham.[1] He supposed that it might have originated from the second epistle of the first book of Horace, which is addressed to Lollius. It opens with the lines

> "Trojani belli scriptorem, maxime Lolli,
> Dum tu declamas Romæ, Præneste relegi."

The theory is, that he confused the person to whom the poem was written with the writer of the Trojan war—by whom Horace means Homer—who is mentioned in it; or, that this confusion had been previously established, and that "by the time of Chaucer," to use Latham's words, "the name of the person addressed had become attached to the person written about." Professor Ten Brink, who reached the same conclusion independently, pointed out that there was no evidence that any such general error prevailed. There seems no refuge, consequently, from the inference that the mistake must be the poet's own. This involves the further assumption that a man who was sufficiently familiar with Latin to translate with reasonable accuracy a philosophical work, written in that tongue, was capable of con-

[1] Letter to the London *Athenæum*, Oct. 3, 1868, p. 433.

fusing in an easy sentence forms so widely distinct as those of the genitive and the vocative case. Chaucer may not have been, and doubtless was not, the most accurate of scholars; but it hardly seems worth while to deny him knowledge of the rudiments of a tongue in which was written the greater part of the literature he was in the habit of reading. To escape this difficulty Ten Brink went a step further. He supposed the poet to be in possession of an imperfect manuscript of Horace, in which *scriptorem* should appear as *scriptorum*, and *te legi* should take the place of *relegi*. All things are possible in conjecture, but all things are not expedient. The explanation suggested is entitled to mention on account of the respect due to the eminent scholar who proposed it. By no stretch of language, however, can it be regarded as probable.

Nor, for that matter, would it be satisfactory. I have already given reasons for believing that Chaucer had no acquaintance whatever with the writings of Horace. But even if we assume that he had, there would be nothing gained by imputing to him a mistake, which, whether due to his own fault or the fault of his manuscript, would not clear up the difficulty connected with the name. For these explanations, like the others that have been offered, fail to satisfy the conditions of the problem. In 'Troilus and Cressida,' Chaucer purports to translate certain things from a writer whom he terms Lollius. The Lollius he has in view in those instances appears as a definite person, whom in one case we can see to be Petrarch, and in the other to be Boccaccio. In the 'House of Fame' again, Lollius is mentioned with

five other authors who were concerned in the telling of the Trojan story. Every one of these five had a real existence to this extent, that a work bearing his name was then known, and has been handed down to our times to be read and studied. It requires us to do violence to every principle of reasoning, to maintain that the sixth author he mentions, whom in two other places also he singles out as the one he is following, should be a man who not only never wrote about the Trojan war himself, but, so far as we know, never wrote about anything at all. Equally unsatisfactory are the several explanations of Trophe that have been attempted. They have come in some instances from scholars of high repute; but they bear an unhappy resemblance to the etymologies of words with which gentlemen of limited learning, but abundant leisure, entertain themselves and afflict the public.

So much for Lollius, who occupies in English poetry very much the same position as Junius in English politics. The last on the list of these unknown writers is Zanzis. Him, most editors, including Tyrwhitt, have disdained even to notice. The name occurs in the fourth book of 'Troilus and Cressida,' in the following lines:

> "And eke as writ Zanzis, that was full wise,
> The newè love outchaseth oft the old."[1]

Sandras assumed this to be a blunder of the scribe for Naso, as Ovid is sometimes termed by Chaucer. The Roman poet had expressed the precise sentiments attributed here to this unknown being.[2] But there is an

[1] Line 414.

[2] *Remedium Amoris*, line 462.

absolute agreement upon this one form in all the manuscripts of the poem that have so far been printed. It is the one, also, which appears in the sixteenth-century editions. With all their facility in confusing proper names, it is not easy to see how the copyists could have effected a transformation of so violent a character. In the tale of the Doctor of Physic, the name Zanzis does occur in two of the best manuscripts, as a painter, along with Pygmalion and Apelles. In the rest it appears as Zepherus. But it does not require the indulgence of any violent conjecture to assume that Zeuxis must be the person meant.[1] The change is one of the kind that is apt to occur when the scribes were trying to decipher a name of which they were not confident. In fact, in the very passage containing it, most of the manuscripts transform Apelles into Apollus, a kind of compromise between the heathen god and the missionary of the early Christian church. Naso is a variation, however, to which Zanzis would not accommodate itself easily. The sentiment, also, is rather too common to render it necessary to assign it to a particular owner to the exclusion of all others. Zanzis accordingly, if no new manuscript come to our rescue, presents a problem yet to be solved, unless for our comfort we take the ground that he is only an imaginary being, created by the poet for the glorification of himself and for the confusion of his readers.

[1] At the same time, it is proper to add that the Ellesmere and Hengwrt manuscripts, in their marginal readings, expressly assert that the Apelles here mentioned is the one already described as having erected the monument to Darius, according to the account contained in the *Alexandreid* of Gualtier de Lille. They also add "de Zanze in libro Tullii" —a reference I am unable to explain.

It is, of course, possible that Chaucer may have invented these names, or that he may have picked them up in the course of his studies, and made them responsible for the sentiments or statements to which he gave utterance. Both of these views, as has been indicated, have found favor with several scholars. It has been intimated, or rather asserted, that the poet introduced as authorities writers of whom no one had ever heard, to give to admiring readers an impression of his own wide learning. Others have maintained, however, that it was for the purpose of mystification that he followed this course. The latter view was one stoutly maintained by the late eminent scholar Henry Bradshaw. He took the ground that, in the case of Lollius, Chaucer was merely carrying out his habitual practice of concealing his real authority and substituting the name of some other writer than the one he was actually copying. This same explanation was made of the introduction of 'Trophe' in the Monk's tale. "Later people," he remarked, "have been bitten with a taste for a library of lost authors, and I think Chaucer may fairly be said to have led the way in this kind of work."[1]

Theories of this sort seem to me to rest upon no foundation of fact whatever. I am willing to accept on Mr. Bradshaw's authority his assertion that there are "later people" who have been bitten with a taste for a library of lost authors. But that Chaucer led the way in it, or that he belonged to the class at all, there is no sufficient evidence. The further assertion that it was his habitual practice to conceal his real authority, and sub-

[1] Prothero's *Memoir of Henry Bradshaw*, p. 216.

stitute for it a fictitious one, is utterly unfounded. So far from its being his habitual practice, it cannot be proved that it was his practice at all. On the contrary, his writings are full of references to his real authorities. He, doubtless, attributed at times the words he quoted to the wrong person. But that is a method of proceeding which, with no intention to mislead, exists at the present day, and without the excuse he could bring. Sometimes, also, when he does not mention the name of his author, he does mention the particular production he is following in such a way that his contemporaries must have understood who it was he had in mind. The marginal notes on the manuscripts indicate, in nearly every instance, writers or works actually known. It is not unreasonable to expect that fuller examination will in time disclose all that is now undiscovered. It will trace to their precise source the Latin sentences which appear in these places against the corresponding translation he has inserted in his text. There is a good deal of labor of this kind still to be done. When once it is done, it is not impossible that it may sensibly enlarge the number of authors with whose productions Chaucer was acquainted. Not all of those who have been mentioned on the margin of the manuscripts have been considered in this chapter. Against the thirty-first stanza of the Man of Law's tale, there is placed on the margin of the Ellesmere and the Hengwrt and other manuscripts a Latin quotation in regard to the selection of time for journeys. This, Tyrwhitt informs us,[1] is taken from the treatise of a certain Zael which goes

[1] Note to line 4732.

under the name of *Liber Electionum*. Furthermore, in the prologue to the tale of the Wife of Bath, the Ellesmere manuscript furnishes references to works, plainly astrological, which appear to be cited by the title of *Mansor*, or of *Mansor Amphorison*', and of *Hermes in libro fiducie Amphoris°*. Precisely what these works are can hardly fail to be made generally known in the future. It is certainly not an impossible thing, also, that the identity of 'Trophe' may be discovered.

The truth is, that, in assuming the position that Chaucer is quoting authors who never had any real existence, we are arguing not from any actual knowledge we possess of his motives, but from the motives we choose to impute to him in order to sustain views of our own. We are arguing, moreover, not from our positive knowledge of his ignorance, but from our positive ignorance of his possible knowledge. The line of reasoning is after the following fashion. Certain writers or writings he quotes we have never seen; we have never even heard of them; we cannot find anywhere a record of them; therefore they never existed. The inference may turn out to be true; but it does not rest upon any solid basis of fact. This is, indeed, the fatal defect which destroys absolute confidence in many other exceedingly probable conclusions. The possibly imperfect acquaintance of the critic with what the poet may have been well acquainted necessarily affects and impairs perfect trust in any examination which the former makes of the sources to which the latter had, or may have had, access. It is not unlikely, therefore, that fur-

ther investigation will show that the survey contained in this chapter of the works with which Chaucer was familiar is in certain ways imperfect; that it lacks the mention of some productions which he had read, but said nothing about specifically; that it also lacks the mention of others to which he clearly alluded, but which the present writer had not sufficient knowledge to discover. Still, though profounder learning and closer research may add names and titles to the list that has been given, and may in consequence modify in places the nature of the results that have been reached, it is not likely that they will ever cause them to be overthrown as a whole, or even to be seriously shaken. It is therefore fairly safe to make some general observations on the character and extent of Chaucer's learning, which seem to be warranted by the facts brought together in the general survey of the subject that has been taken, and seem, in addition, to be corroborated by the manner in which the poet in several instances expresses himself.

We are, in the first place, enabled to assert that any intimate acquaintance with the classic authors is, comparatively speaking, very limited on the part of Chaucer. Ovid, Virgil, and Statius among the poets, Boethius among the prose writers, are the only ones of Latin antiquity with whom he can be said to be thoroughly familiar. Even in the case of these, with the possible exception of Ovid, it is but certain of their productions that he knows well, and not all of them. Among the Christian fathers, the only treatise in which he appears profoundly interested is the tractate of Jerome against Jovinian.

The modern world is represented for him most of all by the *Roman de la Rose*. During every period of his literary career its influence is plainly apparent. The next place in importance must be assigned to the writings of Boccaccio. In his case the indebtedness is not to the prose for which he is now famous, but to his poetry, which is comparatively neglected. To Dante his obligations are far fewer, but they are nevertheless plainly perceptible. This, strictly speaking, completes the catalogue. Other writers and other writings there are which he knew familiarly. Some of them he paraphrased or translated. But these are usually short and fragmentary pieces. The authors that have been mentioned are the ones who were the companions of his graver and the amusement of his lighter hours. Their influence is a constant quantity. We feel it often when there is nothing specific said that can be attributed to anything they wrote. There are many writers besides, who supply him with comparisons or incidents to set off the matter he is narrating, or furnish him the use of their names to be cited as authorities. These alone, however, have entered fully into his spiritual and intellectual life. These alone are largely responsible for what he was and what he wrote.

In the second place, it is to be observed that Chaucer had a wide acquaintance with a body of writers, mainly belonging to the Middle Ages, who wrote in the Latin tongue, but who have never had any pretensions to be included in a collection of classic authors. His acquaintance, though wide, may not have been intimate. As has already been observed, it is a suggestive fact that

a very large proportion of the poet's undoubted references come from the beginning of works, and not from the middle or end. These writers, it will have been noticed, are mainly of the twelfth century. It may be that in those days the reputation of books travelled slowly. It may be that it required one or two hundred years for the ordinary author to become well and widely known. But it is the twelfth century apparently that witnessed, at least in England, the revival of the literary spirit. As its manifestation was confined to an alien and dead tongue, it had nothing but the vitality of the seed that fell on stony ground. It withered away itself, and left no inheritors of its promise. The centuries that followed did not repeat even its poor successes. It was, therefore, the authors of this earlier period that continued still in Chaucer's day to be the ones most read and studied. The list will strike most of us as a somewhat singular one. It contains many names of men of whom few now hear, and of books which still fewer read, and probably no one reads for pleasure. Yet they were the writers and theirs were the works that the poet studied with assiduity, and it may be with delight. However dreary they may seem to us now, they appealed to the tastes of the men of that time. They gave utterance to their sincerest thoughts and feelings; they discussed the questions in which they were supremely interested. It was on what appears to us the barrenest of soils that the genius of Chaucer found no small share of its intellectual and spiritual nutriment. One common delusion of the cultivated class this fact is enough of itself to dispel. If there be anything idler than the idea that intel-

lectual salvation lies in books at all, it is the idea that it lies in books of a particular kind or period.

In the third place, it is to be remarked that the works which Chaucer cited were, in the main, the works which every one then read who made any pretension whatever to being an educated man. There was nothing exceptional or out of the way in the poet's acquirements, if the knowledge of Italian be taken out of consideration. The books with which he displays familiarity are the ones which his contemporaries studied and admired. There is, indeed, nothing about the list of Latin authors that has been given to show that he was possessed of learning that was not common to the men of his time, who did not call or consider themselves endowed with extraordinary attainments. The authors he quotes are the ones they quote. On this point we have the means of furnishing incontestable evidence. At the beginning of the twelfth century flourished a writer called Eberhardus, who wrote a Latin poem entitled 'Labyrinthus.' This dealt with various phases of the subject of education. It is divided into three parts, and the third, which is headed *De Versificatione*, specifies the authors that are to be studied. Some forty are mentioned, nearly all of whom are poets. One noticeable feature is that eighteen that are in this list of Eberhardus are also in the list which has been given of what Chaucer read. These are Virgil, Ovid, Persius, Juvenal, Statius, Lucan, Claudius, and Boethius among the Latin classics. In addition, there are common to both Dionysius Cato, Martianus Capella, Physiologus, Dares Phrygius, Pamphilus, Marbodus, Petrus de Riga, Alanus de Insulis, Gualtier de

Lille, and Geoffrey de Vinesauf. The names of about twenty others appear in the list of Eberhardus to whom Chaucer makes no certain reference. It is reasonable to assume that in the Latin works which he knew well we have nothing more than the standard ones which formed part of the regular course of study in schools, or the regular reading of the educated man of the time. The poet's acquirements were highly respectable. They were in no sense of the word phenomenal. They were much above the average of his age, without doubt, in one respect; for, while he read the same books as others, he read them to far better purpose. But there is nothing to justify the common impression and constant assertion that he was a man of extraordinary attainments. In that matter his own century could hardly have reckoned him as equal to many of his contemporaries, who were slumbering away their lives in monasteries, occupying themselves with the absorption or accumulation of knowledge which the world was later scornfully to reject as untrue, or as not worth acquiring if it were true.

In the fourth place, it is evident that Chaucer was far from looking upon himself as a learned man. His testimony may not be conclusive on the point, but it is certainly worth something. He not only made no pretension to being anything of the sort, he was careful to disavow his possession of anything of that exactness which is, or ought to be, the distinguishing trait of the scholar. It is clear from many of his citations from authors that if he knew them at first hand, he was quoting them from a memory which at times played him false. He was himself aware of the possibility of this thing happening.

On more than one occasion he took the pains to let us know his feelings on the subject. He represents the Manciple as saying:

> "But for I am not textuél,
> I will not tell[1] of textes never a del."[2]

Though it is nominally the person who is relating the story that declares himself unable to repeat with exactness the words of the authorities he quotes, no one who reads the context can doubt that it is of himself that Chaucer is thinking. Still, the plausible objection can be raised against this illustration that the Manciple is an unlearned man. As an unlearned man he must, accordingly, be expected to speak in character. He made no claim to accurate knowledge. He therefore professed to set no store by it, and was unwilling to be criticised for not exhibiting it. But the same thing essentially is said by the Parson whom the poet himself describes as a learned man. In the prologue to his discourse he is careful to observe that he pretends to give only the general meaning of the piece or passage he is quoting or adapting. He is, in consequence, liable to fall into error in matters of detail. He says:

> "This meditatión
> I put it aye under correctìón
> Of clerkès, for I am not textuél;
> I takè but the sentence,[3] trusteth well.
> Therefore I makè protestatión
> That I will standè to correctión."

Chaucer could never have put these words into the

[1] Make account. [2] Bit. [3] Meaning.

mouth of the character he did, were it not that he was conscious that he was himself open to the charge of not being too accurately acquainted with the authorities he cited, and consequently wished to be protected from the censure caused by this lack of familiarity. The charge itself would be no serious one against a man of letters, especially of a man of letters living at the time the poet did. It is only when he is held up to us as a man of precise and profound learning that it becomes a matter worthy of any consideration at all.

It is possible to go even a step further. Nowhere is there in Chaucer that intense sympathy with scholars as scholars which made him blind to the deficiencies that are perhaps largely inseparable from their calling. There is no disposition manifested by him to stand up for them in everything, as if there were no life worth living outside of that found in the circle of books. Even in the glowing tribute paid to the Clerk of Oxford in the prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales,' and in the further references to him in the course of the narrative, we see plainly that the poet recognized the limitations of a character with which he is in the profoundest sympathy, and for which he has the sincerest admiration. With all the generous appreciation he manifests, we are not allowed to forget that the scholar was as reserved and timid in behavior and act as he was unselfish and lofty in thought and feeling. The picture here as elsewhere is true to nature. It may not necessarily be true of the individual, but it is true of the class to which he belongs. Chaucer, himself a man of the world, could not well fail to notice the result of the exclusive life led by those who

are entirely engrossed in the acquisition of learning. Diffidence, constraint, the shyness that often degenerates into awkwardness, have been the scholar's distinguishing marks in all ages. To this want of familiarity with the easier and more natural manners prevalent outside of the cloister, Chaucer calls our attention in his account of the parish clerk who was very far from being devoted to learning.

> "In twenty manner could he skip and dance,
> After the school of Oxenfórdè tho,[1]

is the somewhat ironical tribute he pays to the graces acquired at the university, though for obvious reasons he is careful to refer it to a time other than that wherein he was writing.

No one, however, will be likely to dissent from the view that the catalogue given in this chapter of the works Chaucer knew, or knew about, makes a most creditable exhibition for a man of affairs who lived in days when books were hard to be got, and in many cases were not to be got at all. It shows that the poet was, in his way, a person of wide and, indeed, of omnivorous reading. It proves also unmistakably that he was a person of scholarly tastes. But the possession of scholarly tastes no more constitutes a man a scholar than the possession of poetic tastes constitutes him a poet. It would unquestionably make him fond of books. Nor is it likely that any effort was neglected by him to extend the circle of his knowledge. Though we cannot assert it as a fact, still it was natural enough that in his own day Chau-

[1] Then.

cer should have cared for, and perhaps have striven for, the reputation of learning. To that he would be urged, not only because it was in accordance with his inclinations, but because it opened to him one of the few avenues to distinction that did not require for entering upon it the advantage of birth or the helping hand of the church. For learning is a possession which in every age has a precise and ascertainable value. It is something by which its possessor, or reputed possessor, can be definitely measured. It is in learning, and in learning alone, that in the various fields of literary activity the present time trusts its own judgment. Succeeding ages may sneer at its tastes, at its preferences, and at its critical decisions. It may, in the realm of the pure imagination, exalt those whom it debases, and debase those whom it exalts. Of this as a possibility it is itself always conscious. But it knows that ordinarily its conclusions about the comparative merits of those whom it calls learned will be respected by after-times. Its standard may or may not be high. But so far as it goes, and can be applied, it is generally a trustworthy standard. About the comparative wisdom or comparative genius of the men it produces, it can feel no such certainty that its decisions will be ratified. Respect to learning is, in this aspect, very much like the respect paid to wealth in comparison with that paid to virtue. We can be reasonably sure of the extent of the riches. Of the degree of the virtue we can never be quite so confident. But while Chaucer may have felt a craving for the reputation of learning, it is almost impossible that in any high sense he should have attained its reality. His life was too

crowded to allow of that undisturbed leisure, that undistracted attention, which are essential to securing it. That for this end he took advantage of every opportunity that presented itself there is sufficient reason to believe. That every interval of leisure that could be snatched from the pressure of official duties was devoted to study, he has told us himself. But on the evidence of his own works we can feel equally confident that these occasional lulls in the whirlwind of business were never numerous enough or prolonged enough to enable him to come into full possession of that which is conceded only to continuous and, above all, exclusive devotion.

The view that has been taken in this chapter of the learning of the poet is in no sense of the word an attack upon him. It is wresting no needed laurel from Chaucer's brow to deny him the possession of extensive acquirements in many fields of knowledge, and even of accurate acquirements in any one field. The order of intelligence which enables a man to become a great scholar is something more than different in degree from that which enables him to become a great poet. That the former is inferior in that respect will be granted by all. But it is likewise of a far cheaper and more common kind. Our opinion of Chaucer in the higher sphere of intellectual activity is scarcely affected by the opinion of what he was or what he did in the lower, or of what he failed to be or to do. The knowledge he gained was ample for his purposes, though doubtless far below his desires. But it is not and never was that, whether great or little, upon which his reputation rested. Even in his own age it was not the range of reading he displayed

that made the land, as Gower said, to be filled full everywhere with what he wrote. Nor is it that which causes later times to turn with ever-renewed admiration to the portrayal of the scenes and characters he depicts. It was upon a basis much more solid than that of learning that he built the enduring monument of his fame. From its very nature the reputation of the scholar is transitory. It dies with the advancement of knowledge to which it has itself contributed. Its attainment is buried in time under the pile which has been heaped upon it, and to which it itself may have served as a foundation. Creative genius can afford to leave without envy to inferior men undisputed superiority on those lower levels upon which the man of learning moves. The reputation of Chaucer's achievement will hardly be exalted or abased in the slightest by the amount of knowledge with which the world finally consents to credit him. It has long forgotten even the names of the scholars who were his contemporaries. It is even disposed to be incredulous of the existence of any who had a right to be so entitled. On the other hand, he himself will furnish more and more to others distinction of this subordinate nature. More and more will men be reputed eminent for learning because of the extent to which they have become learned in him and his writings. Of such a nature is not his glory. How much or how little he himself knew is of slightest consequence when set over against his mastery of that spiritual alchemy which converted the dross of daily life into a gold that after-times have come to cherish as among the most priceless of the possessions handed down from the past.

VI.

THE RELATIONS OF CHAUCER TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

AND TO

THE RELIGION OF HIS TIME

CHAUCER'S RELATIONS TO LANGUAGE AND TO RELIGION

IN the sixteenth century Chaucer was frequently styled the English Homer. His career, however, furnishes no such opportunity for fruitless investigation and fierce advocacy as that of the poet who stood at the dawn of Greek civilization. Of the early writers of any literature we know at best but little. But Homer has this surpassing advantage over every other author, that one of the most absorbing questions connected with his life is, whether he ever lived at all. For this satisfactory evidence of any sort must always be lacking. He may have begged his bread, as one famous epigram declares, through seven cities. Not even now, however, do municipal records keep, still less hand down any list of mendicants. But the fact that Chaucer existed is settled for us, if in no other way, by the appearance of his name upon the English pension-rolls. As some compensation for our certainty on this point, there are plenty of questions connected with his life and writings which afford ample opportunity for exhaustive and inconclusive researches. About still others more capable of definite determination, conflicts have long prevailed, and, in some cases, are likely long to prevail. Two of these are matters of general interest. One is

the relation in which Chaucer stood to the English language; the other, the attitude he maintained towards the established religion of his time. They are important enough to demand careful consideration. To a certain extent also there are data sufficient for us to reach, in regard to them, certain well-defined and positive conclusions.

In the critical history of our literature, Chaucer has appeared pretty frequently in the two different rôles of the improver of the English tongue and of its corrupter. It is obvious that both estimates cannot be true. In the sense in which the words have been frequently understood it is certain that neither one of them is true. Yet for the former opinion there is, to some extent, ample justification. The poet's influence upon the development of the English speech was wide-reaching and powerful. Still, this influence was neither of the kind that has often been imputed to it, nor was it attended with the particular results with which it has occasionally been credited. Its character, whether regarded as good or bad, has been constantly misunderstood and misrepresented. About it, therefore, as about nearly everything connected with Chaucer, a number of erroneous assertions came early into being, and still continue to be repeated. Most of them relate to the charge that he was a corrupter of the speech. But the declaration, likewise, that he was its improver has been sometimes accompanied with extravagant statements in regard to what he did, or set out to do. These owe their origin largely to imperfect comprehension of the nature of language and of the agencies by which it is

developed. They are also due, in part, to mistaken conceptions of the motives by which an author is actuated, and of the ends he has in view. Chaucer's relation to the development of the English tongue is the same in kind as that occupied by every great writer. It is greater in degree than that of any, because, by the fact of being a literary pioneer, he was enabled to influence, much more powerfully than those who lived later, the direction in which the current of the speech was tending. Exactly what he did, and the extent to which it was done, as well as what he did not do, it will be the object of the following pages to show.

There has been, and still continues to be, a widespread impression that one of the principal objects, if not the principal object, which the great writer has constantly before his mind is a peculiar operation called refining and polishing the language. To it he is supposed to devote himself untiringly. It is right to modify this statement to the extent that this belief exists about early authors rather than about those who flourish at later periods. When we come to the time of the latter, the refining process is deemed to have been essentially completed. But with the former the case is different. The early writer finds the speech in a very rude and chaotic state. He accordingly proceeds at once to devote time and labor to the work of putting it in order. Assertions of this kind have perhaps been made about every man of genius who has appeared at the beginning of a great literature. They have certainly been made constantly about Chaucer. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the strength of the feeling

which he has been credited with entertaining about the matter in question. The condition of the English language has been represented as something that lay heavy on his heart. To refine it, to polish it, to make it the rival of the most cultivated tongues of Europe was to him an object of peculiar solicitude, was one that occupied his thoughts by day and troubled his dreams by night. Nor does this opinion content itself with the assumption that the improvement and refinement of the speech was a result that followed from his exertions. Such, indeed, is the view which has prevailed from the beginning. His contemporaries and immediate successors were careful to put it upon record. To take one instance out of many, Lydgate, or whoever it was that made the translation in verse of Deguilleville's *Pèlerinage*, asserts it with great explicitness. According to him Chaucer was

> "The first in any age
> That amended our languáge."[1]

But a statement of this sort, while insisting upon the result, does not imply that it was a conscious result. It does not convey the impression that it was an end that the poet himself had distinctly in mind. Such a view it was the province of a later period to make prevalent. The antiquary Leland, who never neglected a possible opportunity to perpetrate a blunder about Chaucer, was the first to bring into prominence this motive for his acts. He was perhaps the one who originated it. Certainly it was a point upon which he laid special

[1] Furnivall's *Trial Forewords to Minor Texts*, p. 15.

stress. He had much to say upon the general subject in his account of Gower, whom he had mistakenly fancied to be the predecessor and master of his great contemporary. Him he represented as being the first to set about the task of improving the English speech. Up to his time it had been uncultivated, and almost entirely rude. In his ornate way, Leland set forth how successfully Gower accomplished his task; how he was enabled to extirpate the rough herbs, and introduce in place of the thistle and the thorn the delicate violet and the purple narcissus. This, we are told, he effected by indefatigable toil in the cultivation of polite literature. Much especially, says Leland, did he sweat in verse.[1] There is an unintended accuracy of statement in this last remark, for the poetry of Gower is much more a product of perspiration than of inspiration. But a mightier genius than he came forward with the same object in view. Chaucer it was who took up with fervor and carried forward with unexampled success the work of his predecessor. The result of his gigantic efforts was, that English assumed at once its place among the most polished languages of the world.[2]

The words of Leland unquestionably influenced the opinions of those who came after him. They were constantly quoted by later writers, or at least the idea expressed by them was reproduced. The view set forth by him of Chaucer's relation to the language was the view that came to be commonly taken. According to it, the improvement of the English tongue was the one thing that supremely occupied the poet's thoughts. For

[1] "Multumque in poesi sudavit."

[2] See vol. i., p. 137.

the purpose of perfecting it he toiled days and sat up nights. The echoes of this report continued to be heard down to the present century, nor have they entirely died away now. Most extraordinary accounts have been given of the measures he took to bring about the refinement and polish at which he aimed. Of many wild statements that have been made upon this point, one is worthy of selection because its utter extravagance gives a better conception of the folly of this belief than would one couched in more guarded terms. According to this writer, the poet had taken a preliminary survey of the chaotic condition in which the language was at that time. He then proceeds to tell us of the heroic remedies that it was found necessary to employ. "Chaucer," he says, "after rendering himself master of the situation as to Anglo-Saxon, French, and Latin, resolved to bring some order out of this confusion: first, he dropped the thirty-four senseless inflections of the Anglo-Saxon definite article, and replaced all by the one invariable monosyllabic word *the*. To complete this part of speech in his native tongue, he introduced *a* as an indefinite article. Also, the seven inflections to denote the gender, number, and case of adjectives disappeared. The ninety-seven absurd changes of the personal and possessive pronouns he reduced to about twenty-one. Of the twenty-three inflections that marked the gender, number, and case in the demonstrative pronoun, he retained but two: *this* and *thise* (now *these*). As the above parts of speech, article, noun, adjective, and pronoun, constituted all declinable Anglo-Saxon words, let us add that Chaucer dropped the inflections,

and substituted the invariable particles *of*, *from*, *to*, *in*, *by*, and *with*, to denote the genitive, dative, and accusative, which obviates declension in English. To form the plural of nouns he adopted the French rule, 'add *s* to the singular.'"[1]

That as late as the year 1879 a man could be found to write a bulky volume of seven hundred pages upon the English language, and be guilty of the statements that have just been cited, may strike some with surprise. Yet it is hardly too much to say that while these words differ in degree, they do not differ essentially in kind from much that has been printed upon the subject in reputable books and pamphlets and periodicals. Many persons seem unable to comprehend the fact that language is a growth, and not a creation; that the same general influences are always operating upon it, and that it was not in the power of a man of the fourteenth century to effect changes of the sort just mentioned any more than it would be in the power of a man of the nineteenth. The truth of the matter is that no great writer goes about consciously refining and purifying a language. That such a result may come to pass in consequence of his labors is so far from being impossible that to some extent it must always happen. When it has happened, it is even conceivable that in looking back over his career he may fancy that what has been accomplished was designedly accomplished. But it is safe to say that it is something which at the outset never enters into his thoughts at all. It is not of the improve-

[1] *Origin, Progress, and Destiny of the English Language and Literature*, by John A. Weisse, M.D., p. 279.

ment and refinement of some abstract object called language of which he is thinking. It is the improvement and refinement of his own language which occupies his mind constantly. It is with the effort to express purely and effectively what he has to say that he busies himself. If a man of genius does this in any age, he is certain to exert a powerful effect upon the speech. The admiration he inspires is sure to beget an imitation which makes all his peculiarities of expression and diction familiar and sometimes universal.

For any such result, however, it is essential that he should be a man of genius. No author has much influence upon the speech, merely because he happened to live before other people lived. The choice of the Midland dialect as the literary language of England was never materially helped forward by the production in it of writings which comparatively few took the trouble to read, and no one to imitate. To produce any real effect upon a tongue it is necessary that an author shall do something more than exist. He must be widely read and studied. His works must be regarded as models to which all will endeavor to conform their own expression. This can only happen for any continuous time and on any extensive scale to a great writer. It was what happened to Chaucer, and to Chaucer alone among our early poets. There were those before him who wrote in prose and verse. Still, their productions had no appreciable effect upon the development of English speech. They contain a record of the changes that were then going on in grammar and vocabulary. But they were never of sufficient might or popularity to accelerate or retard

these changes or to alter their course. The position of Chaucer was different. He was not only the first in point of time, he was the first in point of genius. In the exercise of his genius he showed his admirers and followers what possibilities of expression lay unsuspected in the language. He furnished them the best of models to imitate, he set up for them a standard of achievement at which to aim. In this sense he can most justly be called the refiner and purifier of our speech. His influence operated not merely upon the spirit and general structure of the composition, but extended even to details which vary from age to age. The words and the grammatical forms and the peculiarities of speech he used became largely the ones that were employed by the men who came after. So great was the disposition to follow in his footsteps that the Scotch poets occasionally adopted prefixes which were not only foreign to the Northern dialect, but which the Midland itself was discarding, and adopted them for no other reason than that they were found in his writings. With Chaucer, indeed, began the arrest of the rapid changes that were going on in the development of the English tongue. With him the restraining influence that literature exerts over language first asserted itself decidedly. But such a position as this towards the speech does not imply that he had either the desire or the power to make changes in its grammar and vocabulary. That is something which could not be true of him, or of any man who sought to be read and admired. A way of looking upon him as being, after this fashion, an improver of the tongue is only a little less absurd than the oppo-

site one we come now to consider, that is, that he was its corrupter.

The originator of this view was the antiquary Richard Verstegan. The family to which he belonged was of Dutch origin. He himself was, however, a native of England, and in the intensity of his patriotism he was not surpassed by any inhabitant who could have traced his descent to some one of the horde that came over with Hengist and Horsa. In 1605 appeared the work by which he is best known. It is entitled 'Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities concerning the Most Noble and Renowned English Nation.' This is, in many ways, an interesting book, and perhaps for its day a valuable one. A good deal, indeed, of the intelligence it restored might well have been suffered to remain in a state of decay with every advantage to the truth of fact. But the confusion which existed in the minds of men by which the English had confounded themselves with the original Celtic inhabitants of the island, Verstegan helped to clear up effectually. His work was reprinted several times during the seventeenth century, and was looked upon as an authority. Hence the paragraph it contained about Chaucer and his introduction of words from the French came to be widely quoted. Stow had spoken of the poet as "the first illuminer of our English language." This was not the sort of view taken by his brother antiquary. Verstegan looked upon the borrowing of words from foreign tongues with anything but complacency. In speaking of the conquest of the country by the Normans, he observed that they were not enabled to conquer the language as they were the

land, though they did mingle with it much of the French. "Some few ages after," he went on to say, "came Geoffrey Chaucer, who writing his poesies in English, is of some called the first illuminator of the English tongue: of their opinion I am not (though I reverence Chaucer as an excellent poet for his time). He was indeed a great mingler of English with French, unto which language, belike for that he was descended of French, or rather Walloon, race, he carried a great affection."

It is, perhaps, no particular discredit to Verstegan himself that he made the assertion he did. He acted according to his light, and there was then very little light existing on the subject of language. It was his feelings that led him into the error he made. Somebody must be held responsible for a deplorable condition of things he found, and no one seemed so suited to bear the burden as Chaucer. For Verstegan was not only a devoted admirer of the most noble and renowned English nation, but also of the great Teutonic speech to which the English tongue belonged. To its high antiquity, its propriety, worthiness, and amplitude he devoted a separate chapter. The superior claims of the Hebrew to be reckoned the language of the garden of Eden it would have been both presumptuous and perilous to dispute. There was then too general an agreement on that point among divines and theologians for any mere layman to express a dissenting opinion with confidence or even with safety. Still, Verstegan could not help entertaining a sneaking feeling that the original Teutonic was pretty certainly the speech used by our

first parents. He did not venture to assert this unqualifiedly. But he observed that the very learned Joannes Goropius Becanus "letted not to maintain" that it was "the first and most ancient language of the world, yea, the same that Adam spake in Paradise." He also tells us that he had a conversation on this subject with Abraham Ortelius, and from his words he guessed that he likewise "did much incline unto Becanus his conceit." Verstegan himself was disposed to admit that the opinion was hardly sustained by the proofs upon which it was founded. He could not refrain, however, from pointing out some reasons that might well justify a man in taking this seemingly paradoxical view. He was particular to observe that the proper names Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Seth, and Enoch have in the Teutonic the meaning it was most likely that God would give unto his first creatures as fit and proper to such persons as they really were themselves. Several other linguistic illustrations he introduced which showed that if this were not the primitive tongue, it was assuredly "one of the most ancientest of the world." Upon this point, indeed, the evidence was simply overwhelming. In the very word *babble*, for instance, we had at this very day a reminiscence of the confusion of tongues that befell mankind at the building of the Tower of Babel. Upon him who has beliefs of this kind one can afford to look with a forbearance to which the better-balanced but fatter-witted pedants who echoed his words are not entitled. A man who in his secret heart felt that the Teutonic was the language used in the garden of Eden was warranted in expressing a good deal of vexation at the introduction

of words from outside sources that impaired the purity of the primitive speech of the race. More than that, he was justified in being indignant when that alien element came from the French, a tongue which no Englishman of any age could have been made to look upon as having been spoken by any one in Paradise, unless by him whose seductive words had led to the fall of mankind.

As Verstegan's authority stood high in his own generation and the one that immediately succeeded, his assertion about Chaucer met with ready acceptance. Accordingly, the poet was henceforth held responsible for the large accession of French words which the English speech received in the fourteenth century. It was assumed as an undeniable fact both by those who believed it to be a good thing in itself as well as by those who looked upon it with disfavor. Fuller was one of the former class. In his 'Church History' he quoted the statement of Verstegan. "But he who mingles wine with water," he added, "though he destroy the nature of water, improves the quality thereof." Antiquaries, as distinguished from men of letters, did not take so kindly a view of the poet's conduct. They naturally followed the lead of their fellow-antiquary. There is a subdued growl on this very point to be found in Hearne's preface to his edition of Robert of Gloucester.[1] "The Saxon tongue," he wrote, * * * "continued to be spoke (though with great alteration) in Robert of Gloucester's time and many years after, and it began to be most of all disused when Geoffrey Chaucer undertook to refine (as they termed it) the language."

[1] Vol. i., p. 11.

But though it was Verstegan with whom this statement originated, it was not, after all, to him that its wide prevalence was due. Nor can he be considered the one who was responsible for the length of time the belief endured. There was another man who took an active part in propagating this fiction. In 1671, four years after the death of its author, appeared the 'Etymological Dictionary' of Stephen Skinner. This was a work that was long looked upon as an authority for the derivation of words. Very probably it was little seen save in the hands of scholars. But it was in their hands a great deal. Through them the opinions it expressed reached a large and constantly widening circle. The preface contained a remark about Chaucer which long continued to be quoted. After speaking of the diseased itch for novelty which had led the people of the Netherlands to contaminate the purity of their native speech by the introduction of French words, Skinner passed on to the English author. "Chaucer," he wrote, "having by the worst sort of example brought in whole cart-loads of words into our speech from the same France, despoiled it, already too much adulterated by the victory of the Normans, of almost all its native grace and elegance."[1] A remark like this, appearing in an authoritative work of reference, naturally spread far and wide a belief which had hitherto been held but by few.

It is impossible to find for the repeater and expander of this absurd assertion about Chaucer the excuse which

[1] "Chaucerus, pessimo exemplo, integris vocum plaustris ex eadem Gallia in nostram linguam invectis, eam, nimis antea a Normannorum victoria adulteratam, omni fere nativa gratia et nitore spoliavit."

can be readily conceded to its originator. Skinner had been pursuing investigations and collecting examples which were amply sufficient to show the falsity of the assumption that the poet's vocabulary was at all different from that of his contemporaries. Moreover, he had no fine frenzy about the Teutonic having been the language of Paradise. In his preface he had even permitted himself to speak disrespectfully of Joannes Goropius Becanus. He was, in truth, nothing more than a dull industrious scholar, who had not the slightest excuse in his character for giving way to extravagance of statement, or for deviating from that accuracy which forms the principal redeeming feature in the pedantry of many learned men. Yet, with all these advantages from the nature of his own mind, and with his special opportunities for arriving at the truth from the nature of his studies, he contrived to acquire as little knowledge as Verstegan of the subject about which he was talking, and to emphasize his own lack of judgment by the emphatic manner in which it was expressed.

The passage quoted from Skinner fixed, however, a stigma of disrepute on Chaucer which lasted for a long period. The business of corrupting the language which, according to the wiseacres of every generation, has now been steadily going on for centuries, and is always to be attended with direful results, was thought to owe its origin to the first great poet of our literature. The statement of the transformation the speech underwent in consequence of his reckless introduction of French words formed for the next hundred years the staple of the ordinary comment upon his vocabulary, though it

sometimes took the shape of approval rather than of censure. It was echoed by nearly every writer of the eighteenth century who touches upon the relation of Chaucer to the English tongue. The practice began, indeed, at the end of the century previous. We can find all the common cant of linguistic criticism upon this subject in the preface to the second volume of the original edition of Wood's 'Athenæ Oxonienses,' published in 1692. This was contributed by James Harrington, of Christ Church. It possesses a slight interest now, not only for its matter without much meaning, but more particularly as a specimen of crude Johnsonese, produced some time before Johnson was born. "As to the poetry of the age," said this writer, "the beauty of speech, and the graces of measure and numbers, which are the inseparable ornaments of a good poem, are not to be expected in a rude and unsettled language; and though Chaucer, the father of our poets, had not taken equal care of the force of expression as of the greatness of the thought: yet the refining of a tongue is such a work as never was begun and finished by the same hand. We had before only words of common use, coin'd by our need or invented by our passions: nature had generally furnished this island with the supports of necessity, not the instruments of luxury; the elegance of our speech as well as the fineness of our garb is owing to foreign correspondence. And as in clothes, so in words, at first they usually broke in unalter'd upon us from abroad: and consequently, as in Chaucer's time, came not over like captives, but invaders." There are not many ideas in this verbiage, but what there are indicate the general

acceptance of the view that the introduction of the foreign vocabulary was the work of the poet. Up to the latter part of the eighteenth century Johnson is the only author who appears to have expressed a doubt of its correctness. In the preparation of his dictionary he had consulted too many early productions to be misled on a point where accuracy was so easily obtainable. "He that reads the works of Gower," he wrote in the Introduction to that work, "will find * * * French words, whether good or bad, of which Chaucer is charged as the importer."

But it was not Johnson who wrought the demolition of this error. That task, like many similar ones, was reserved for the man whose career is marked by the havoc he made with absurd beliefs of every kind that had come to prevail about the poet. In the introductory essay upon the language and versification of Chaucer which was prefixed to the edition of 1775 of the 'Canterbury Tales,' Tyrwhitt devoted himself to a refutation of this statement. He did it so effectually that the work has never had to be done over again. Still, it took a long time for the truth to prevail over the falsehood that had been so carefully taught. Even after the systematic exposure he made of the errors upon which it had been founded, the belief continued to linger. "Chaucer had enriched rather than purified our language," was a remark that Walpole contributed to the appendix of his work on 'Royal and Noble Authors.'[1] The distinction between the two verbs he did not explain. But the same view cropped out in the writ-

[1] Walpole's *Works*, ed. of 1798, vol. i., p. 564.

ings of men of a later time from whom we had a right to expect better things. "His diction," said Charles Cowden Clarke, in speaking of Chaucer, "abounds with Gallicisms as well as with positive French words."[1] This kind of comment occasionally puts in a somewhat belated appearance even at this day. As a belief, however, if it now exist at all, it is only with that class of half-educated men who assiduously enter upon the work of investigation with no other apparent purpose, and certainly with no other manifest result than to dig up and set going the buried and forgotten blunders of the past.

While upon the subject of the imperishable injury that the poet was supposed to have done to the language by the wholesale introduction of French terms, it is worth while to notice that there was another tongue which, for a time, he was assumed to have laid under contribution for the same specific purpose. This was the Provençal. Chaucer's indebtedness to that speech was first communicated to the world by Rymer, who thought himself a poet, and was thought by some a critic. He was excellently equipped for making this particular discovery. The process by which he hit upon it was a happy one. His method was nothing more than to extend to literary history the grammatical rule that two negatives make an affirmative. He knew nothing to speak of about Chaucer. He knew nothing to speak of about Provençal. Putting his two kinds of negative knowledge together, he was enabled to make the affirmative statement that an author of whom he

[1] Preface to *Riches of Chaucer*, p. viii., vol. i. (1830).

knew little had introduced into the English tongue a vast number of words from a language of which he knew less. He did not censure the poet for this course. On the contrary, he complimented him for it. "They," he says in one place, "who attempted verse in English down till Chaucer's time made an heavy pudder, and are always miserably put to it for a word to clink; which commonly fall so awkward, and unexpectedly, as dropping from the clouds by some machine or miracle. Chaucer found an Herculean labor on his hands, and did perform to admiration. He seizes all Provençal, French, or Latin that came in his way, gives them a new garb and livery, and mingles them amongst our English; turns out English, gouty or superannuated, to place in their room the foreigners, fit for service, trained and accustomed to poetical discipline." "Chaucer," he says in another place, "threw in Latin, French, Provencial, and other languages, like new stum to raise a fermentation."[1]

The statement of Rymer had the good or ill fortune to be cited by Dryden in commendatory terms in the preface to the 'Fables.' The adoption of any view by Dryden was enough to give it wide acceptance and circulation in the eighteenth century. Accordingly, during about three fourths of it, Provençal appeared pretty regularly as a language which had furnished no small proportion of the foreign vocabulary that the poet had succeeded in introducing into English. That he had imitated the manner of the writers of that tongue was laid down by Pope in the sketch of the plan he

[1] *A Short View of Tragedy*, by Mr. Rymer. London, 1695, p. 78.

made of the history of English poetry that he purposed writing. Warburton, who was never so happy as when making or supporting an error of fact, naturally improved upon this statement. "Our intrigues on the Continent," he wrote, "brought us acquainted with the Provincial poets, and produced Chaucer."[1] Gray repeated Pope's statement. Warton, in his 'History of English Poetry,' gave to the same assertion the stamp of his authority. He went, indeed, somewhat further than his predecessors. He assigned the 'House of Fame' to a possible Provençal source. Not satisfied with that, he said expressly that Chaucer "formed a style by naturalizing words from the Provencial, at that time the most polished dialect of any in Europe, and the best adapted to the purposes of poetical expression." This statement was made in his first volume which appeared in 1774. Tyrwhitt's edition of the 'Canterbury Tales' followed the next year. That scholar, who exorcised so many spectres stalking about in the guise of realities, naturally took care to put this particular ghost to rest. He asserted that in no one of the poet's writings had he observed a phrase or word which had the least appearance of having been fetched by him from the South of the Loire. Moreover, he went on not only to express his doubt of Chaucer's having any acquaintance with the poets of Provence, but to declare that he should be slow to believe that either the matter or the manner of their compositions had been copied by him, until some clear instance of imitation had been produced. Warton, in a note to be found among his addi-

[1] *Pope's Works*, ed. of 1751, vol. iv., note to p. 183.

tions, lamely defended a statement for which he never had any authority. He explained away the meaning of what he said, and withdrew from the subject in a cloud of general reflections in regard to the system of criticism he had formed, and followed on Chaucer's works. Since Tyrwhitt's denial, Provençal has not again put in an appearance as a source from which the English poet derived either words or ideas. It ought to be added, however, that up to this time the subject has undergone no further examination. In consequence, no attempt has been made to ascertain the possible existence of what probably does not exist.

Views of the sort that have been considered are to be noticed not for the vogue they have, but for the vogue they have had. Their appearance in any work at the present time would be unimpeachable evidence of the lack of adequate knowledge on the part of its author. But guesses and conjectures and unfounded assertions are not the exclusive property of any one age. There is a blunder of the same general nature about the language of Chaucer which has been current in the present century. It has received, besides, the sanction of some prominent scholars. The doctrine has been expressly taught that the diction of the poet represented the speech of the men of high social station, especially that of the court, and of those connected with it by birth or rank or service, as contrasted with that of the great body of the common people—though not necessarily of the common people who had no education of any sort. The speech of these latter, constituting by their number the bulk of the nation, was represented, we are

told, by the vigorous and homely lines of Langland. The vocabulary of this middle class was characterized by a strongly marked Saxon flavor. It abounded in expressions that were energetic, even if they were not elegant. On the other hand, French words were comparatively few. Such was for some time the favorite doctrine to hold and to proclaim as to the language of the two contemporary poets. It seems to be a modern view, for Tyrwhitt, who exploded most errors about Chaucer that were in circulation in his time, was apparently not aware of the existence of this one. It was to a scholar who had, there was every reason to suppose, special familiarity with the diction of both authors that the opinion owes perhaps its origin. At any rate, to his authority was due whatever currency it attained. In 1832, Thomas Wright brought out an edition of the 'Vision of Piers Plowman.' In 1847, he brought out two of three volumes of an edition of the 'Canterbury Tales.' In the preface to the former work he remarked that Langland's poem was "a pure specimen of the English language at a period when it had sustained few of the corruptions which have disfigured it since we have had writers of Grammar." It is not quite easy to understand what this means, though perhaps all scholars will agree that no body of men have, as a whole, been more ignorant of our tongue than those who have written its grammars. But in the introduction to his edition of the 'Canterbury Tales' he spoke of the fusion of the Anglo-Saxon and the Anglo-Norman words in a common vocabulary. "This form of the English language," he wrote, "was that of the author of 'Piers Ploughman' and of Geoffrey Chaucer;

the former representing the popular feelings, and containing fewest French words, while Chaucer, as the poet of the higher society, uses French words in much greater abundance. In our language of the present day, we have lost as much of the English of 'Piers Ploughman' as we have of the French of the 'Canterbury Tales.'"

This, it will be seen, is essentially nothing more than the assertion of Verstegan and Skinner, but revamped and modified to suit the advance of knowledge. The view, though just as erroneous, is accordingly, on its face, not so absurd. Chaucer is not held responsible for creating a new language. He simply selected for his own use that which was employed in the higher circles where he expected to find his readers. Had he been writing for the middle class, he would have adopted a diction with more Saxon and fewer French words. This was, in short, the belief which for some time continued to be widely held and frequently expressed. There was every reason, outside of its actual falsity, for assuming it to be correct. It could show in its favor the authority of the very scholar who had edited the two poets whose language was made the basis of contrast. His attention could hardly have failed to be drawn to the character of their respective vocabularies. The result naturally was that for a while nobody thought of disputing the statement he had made.

It was Marsh who first demonstrated the erroneous nature of this belief. He subjected to comparison a large number of lines in the writings of the two authors. As a result of this investigation, he proved beyond question that the language of Langland abounds more

in words from foreign sources than that of Chaucer.[1] The difference between them in this respect was not great; but what there was, was in favor of the greater man. The fact was, doubtless, due mainly to difference of subject. Langland's poem dealt largely with matters of religion. It was naturally sprinkled pretty liberally with theological terms. In part, also, it was due to the demands of alliteration. The necessity resting upon the author of finding for each line several important words beginning with the same letter compelled the introduction of some which would have been little likely to have been used in a less artificial structure of verse. It is in this way we can perhaps account for such words as *file*, a 'daughter;' *spelonke*, a 'cave;' *maungerie*, a 'feast;' and many others which are not only never heard now, but have never been common in any period of English speech. Both Chaucer and Langland employed, however, a language that for literary purposes was substantially the same, whether the author were addressing men high or low in social position. The fact that the so-called poet of the common people used more words of French or Latin origin than the so-called poet of the upper classes was principally due, as has been said, to difference of subject. At any rate, it was not at all due to any need of varying the speech according to the station in life of possible readers.

It ought not, indeed, to be necessary to say that Chaucer wrote in the speech of his time, and wrote in that only. The idea of constructing or reconstructing a

[1] *Lectures on the English Language*, 1st series, 4th ed., 1863, pp. 124, 168.

language no more entered his mind than it has that of any of his successors. Even less than they would he have been likely to strew his pages with strange words. Men of genius are little apt to take this course in any age. But in days when the readers in any one tongue were few, when the knowledge of foreign tongues was limited to far fewer, and when dictionaries did not exist, the introduction of a large number of unfamiliar terms would have been the most effectual means a writer could have devised to keep himself from being read at all. There need be no doubt entertained that Chaucer was as well aware of this fact as we. He could not have introduced many foreign words into the tongue if he would, and he would not have introduced them if he could. His main object in writing, like that of every author, was to be read. He could only hope to be read widely by writing in a language which every one was capable of comprehending. That course he certainly followed. He became the popular author of his time. To that fact is due the influence he has exerted upon the speech. He wrote in the East-Midland dialect. It was largely because he wrote in it that the East-Midland dialect became the language of English literature. The wide circulation of his poems preserved many words which otherwise would have died out. His work, in consequence, was the first effectual barrier that literature raised against the rapid change then going on in our speech. His influence, however, is not different in kind from that exercised by every author of commanding genius. It is only because he was prior in time that it was greater in degree.

There is one way, however, in which Chaucer's influence over the destinies of the language can hardly be overrated. He was the first to make writing in it respectable. To the men of his time who had aspiration for permanent fame, the outlook must have seemed sorry enough. No one could write freely, or with the highest excellence, in a language that was dead. Yet only by so doing could he find for himself that audience fit, though few, who constituted the small reading public whose decision was the guarantee of even present fame. A similar difficulty beset the future. Would any of the modern languages survive? If so, what one? These were the questions that must often have weighed upon the minds of those who had the desire, even when they did not have the ability, to produce works which after-times should read with pleasure. We see their state of mind exemplified in the respectable Gower, who intrusted to three languages a reputation which has hardly been able to maintain itself in one. Nor was this feeling confined to Englishmen, though it was perhaps more powerful among them than among the men of other countries. There was, in particular, everywhere a sense of the special unfitness of the modern tongues for prose. It was one of the greatest services that Boccaccio rendered to the Italian race that he showed it what a flexible and capable instrument of expression it possessed for this particular purpose in its own speech. Yet his great contemporary Petrarch failed utterly to recognize the fact. He wrote no prose in the vernacular idiom himself. He had little patience with efforts of this kind on the part of others. It was not till the last year of his

life that he saw the 'Decameron,' and the first thing he did after looking it over was to turn into Latin the tale that had especially attracted his fancy. The indifference of Petrarch for the prose of his native tongue, or rather his contempt for it, may have been one reason why Boccaccio never took the pains to bring his greatest work to the attention of the foremost man of letters of his country, who was at the same time his intimate friend.

From any weakness of this kind about the native speech, and from the lack of foresight it implies, Chaucer was to all appearances singularly free. He may not have been sure of the permanence of the language in which he wrote. Indeed, from the lines in his epistle to Scogan, that "all shall passen that men prose or ryme," we may take for granted that he felt no confidence in the perpetuity of his own fame. But he had the good sense to see that the only language in which an Englishman had any business to write was the English. It was a good deal of a discovery to make in the fourteenth century. Even in the seventeenth it had not been apprehended, and not till our own time has it been comprehended fully. Our literary history is strewn with academic exercises in Latin and Greek, and to some extent in French and Italian. Men of genius have occasionally wasted time and effort in the creation of these artificial productions. Men of pedantry have naturally addicted themselves to the work with enthusiasm. It has been the distinction upon which they have prided themselves that they could do something well which was not worth doing at all. But they have thereby been ena-

bled to felicitate themselves upon their superiority to their fellow-men, in that they were in possession of a taste capable of fully appreciating a delicate literary flavor, the existence of which grosser intellectual palates could not even detect.

In this whole matter the thorough independence of Chaucer's character is exhibited, as well as the soundness of his judgment. It required then a good deal of hardihood for one who could write in another language to write in English at all—that is, unless he had some specific end in view to excuse his conduct, such as the communication of necessary information or of religious instruction. But in the course Chaucer took there was never any uncertainty or wavering. A living speech was preferable in his eyes to one that was dead, or was kept in a semi-animated state by the exertions of scholars. It is plain from the introduction to his treatise on the 'Astrolabe' that there existed then a prejudice against putting a work of learning into the vulgar tongue. Chaucer assumes, indeed, an almost apologetic attitude for taking a step of this kind, though he plainly gives us to understand that, in his opinion, it is the only kind of step that ought to be taken. But there are other views of his bearing upon the question of language into which he gives us an insight. If a modern language was to be chosen it was the English of England that Englishmen should employ, and not the French of England. For the latter, indeed, he made no effort to veil his contempt. The well-known ironical reference in the general Prologue to the school of Stratford-at-the-Bow places this matter beyond any reasonable doubt.

There has, indeed, been put forth of late a most extraordinary interpretation of these lines for the sake of wresting them from their received and, it may be added, natural meaning. We have been told that Chaucer had not the slightest intention of making any disparaging comment upon the French then spoken in England, and that those who spoke it were, doubtless, as well satisfied with it as were the Parisians themselves with their own dialect. That the latter part of the assertion is true is fairly conceivable. Especially might it be true at a time when the subject of speech would not be discussed at all outside of very limited circles, and derogatory opinions would rarely meet the ears of those who suffered under them. It is by no means impossible that the inhabitants of Soli prided themselves upon their use of a very superior kind of Greek. But the estimation in which a language is held or is to be held is not decided by the view taken of it by those who have the fortune or misfortune to be born into the possession and employment of it. Their good opinion does not prevent the depreciatory estimate of others. The reputation for purity and excellence which any tongue acquires depends on what men put into it, depends on the character of the literature which finds in it expression. The superiority of the latter carries with it the superiority of the former. In the fourteenth century the French of Paris had become the language of French literature. That involved the degradation of all other forms of it to the position of dialects. The one spoken in England shared the common fate. It suffered in the same way in the common estimation. The time had then gone by when English-

men could write, without subjecting themselves to criticism, in what had come to be a debased form of the French tongue. It took Gower a long while to learn this truth, which his fellow-poet had seen at the outset. The natural inference derived both from Chaucer's words and practice is confirmed, if confirmation be thought needful, in the contrast drawn between the past and the present by the author of the 'Testament of Love.' He, though unknown, was unquestionably a contemporary of both these writers. "In Latin and French," he wrote, "hath many sovereign wits had great delight to endite, and have many noble things fulfilled; but certes there be some that speak their poesy matter in French, of which speech the Frenchmen have as good a fantasy as we have in hearing of Frenchmen's English." It is the distinction of England's earliest great poet that he was the first man of ability to recognize the value of the speech of England purely as an instrument of expression; that he wasted no time and labor on essays in dead tongues, or in unavailing struggles to attain an imitative excellence in living tongues that were not his own. It was to his native speech he confined his efforts. The genius he displayed made it honorable. The fame he acquired caused others to follow his example. The language of England, upon which he was the first to confer celebrity, has amply justified the foresight which led him to disdain all others for its sake, and, in turn, has conferred an enduring celebrity upon him who trusted his reputation to it without reserve.

So much for Chaucer's relation to the language. When we come to the question of the relation in which he

stood to the religious beliefs and tendencies of his time, we enter at once upon a far more difficult and doubtful field of inquiry. The obscurity that envelops the subject is not due entirely to the absence of contemporary notices of his life and opinions. It was an inevitable result of the position in which he was placed. The impressions which in the case of a modern author are naturally derived from his own words are themselves subject to suspicion in his case. In the time in which he flourished there would have been danger in expressing sentiments or advocating doctrines that were looked upon with disfavor by the established church. The religious situation was not one which prompted to open-mindedness. Any dissident or disbeliever in that age, unless he were a professed religious reformer, or endued with the spirit of a martyr, would speak guardedly upon matters of faith. He could attack certain orders in the church; for if that course made him enemies, it also gained him friends. But it would never do for him to assail any of those central beliefs in which all parties had a common stake.

It is desirable to make prominent at the outset the difficulties that stand in the way of arriving at definite results. There is not a single thing that can be established with absolute conclusiveness. There is frequently little to indicate in what direction the weight of evidence tends. Still, there are always grades of doubtfulness, and we can begin with the consideration of one or two points about which a fair degree of certainty can be attained. The first concerns the relationship in which Chaucer stood to Wycliffe. Was he a follower

of the great reformer? The question has often been answered in the affirmative. More often the affirmative has been assumed without the question being asked. No claim, indeed, has been put forward more persistently than this. Nor have its supporters confined themselves to a general declaration of sympathy in opinion existing between the two men. The assertion has been made again and again that in the portrait of the parish-priest in the Prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales,' Chaucer had Wycliffe specifically in mind, and depicted in it his own conception of his contemporary's character. Writers have, indeed, gone so far as to describe the great poet not only as being in spiritual unison with the great reformer, but as standing to him in the relation of pupil to teacher.

Without wasting time upon extravagancies and absurdities like this last, we find the acceptance by the one of the religious opinions of the other constantly taken for granted by the men who have dealt with the transactions of the period. This is particularly true of the older historians and biographers. They usually speak of it as a fact, the truth of which is conceded by all. But the view, though more openly expressed by them, is far from being limited to them. It continues to be heard at the present day even from those who have made a special study of the time. "Chaucer a Wycliffite," says incidentally the late Professor Brewer, "and therefore not favorable to the Friars."[1] The belief, even when rejected, affects the judgments of men upon the views which in their origin were due to the

[1] Preface to *Monumenta Franciscana*, p. xl., note.

belief itself. Lechler, for instance, recognizes clearly the essential difference between the character of the poet and of the divine. He scouts, accordingly, the idea of the one being a partisan of the other. Yet even he maintains that the latter was probably the personage the former had before his mind when he drew his picture of the Parson of the town in the general Prologue.[1] So widespread, in truth, has been the belief, so frequently does it show itself still, that it is a matter that demands a full account of its origin, and a full examination of its claim to acceptance.

It was with the Reformers of the sixteenth century that this notion took its rise. In the contest they were carrying on with the church of Rome they sought aid in every quarter that might furnish anything which could legitimately be deemed helpful to the cause they had at heart. To them Wycliffe was an object of ardent admiration. He was their forerunner, the prophet of the dawn who had anticipated the coming day which they were about to see realized in its glory. To join with him Chaucer was not an unnatural desire. Even among the Reformers most indifferent to literature, it was not a matter of indifference to have enrolled upon their side far the greatest name then existing in English literature. They were not insensible to the advantage that would accrue to their cause from an accession of this sort. They accordingly displayed at a very early period a marked anxiety to press the poet into the service of Protestantism. Nor was their opinion of his

[1] *Johann von Wiclif und die Vorgeschichte der Reformation*, von Gotthard Lechler, Band i., S. 408 ff.

opinions unreasonable in the light of the knowledge possessed by the men of that time. There was much in what he wrote to lend countenance to this belief. More than that, there was even justification for it so long as certain works were then universally attributed to Chaucer which are now as universally recognized to be spurious. The habit of making him responsible for all pieces wandering about without recognized parentage has been pointed out in a previous chapter. Most of them have nothing controversial in their character. But among them were some that were bitter in their denunciation of practices prevalent in the church of Rome. They were confidently imputed to him, it need not be assumed from design, but from the general custom which has already been fully described. Among these productions was the prose piece entitled 'Jack Upland.' Though previously printed as his, it did not find a place in his collected writings till the beginning of the seventeenth century. Another was the 'Pilgrim's Tale,' which never found a place in his collected writings at all. But there was one production, in particular, upon which the belief was largely founded, and to which it owed its general acceptance. This was the violent and even abusive poem called the 'Plowman's Tale.' After it had been included among Chaucer's works in the edition of 1542, its genuineness seems never to have been suspected by the adherents of the reforming party. Nor, apparently, was it ever seriously called in question by those who still cleaved to the ancient faith. It gave, accordingly, to the men of that time what was regarded as indisputa-

ble evidence of the poet's hostility to the church of Rome.

This view was attended with one most singular result so far as Chaucer was personally concerned. The fortune of religious controversy not only caused him for a time to be classed among the Reformers, but even to be enrolled among ecclesiastical and theological writers. By his first biographer, writing in the earlier half of the sixteenth century, he is credited with being a devout theologian.[1] Much did the worthy Fox, in his 'Acts and Monuments of the Church,' marvel at the folly and blindness of the bishops in suffering the poet's works to be read and circulated. Much did he praise the skill, in which, veiling his meaning under shadows, he succeeded in so suborning truth that privily, we are told, it profited the godly-minded, and yet was not espied of the crafty adversary. Much was he disposed to believe the report, though it came to him in a roundabout way, of certain persons who had been brought to the true knowledge of religion by reading the works of Chaucer. The passage of Fox, indeed, though a somewhat long one, is worthy of quotation, not for any information in regard to the poet it furnishes us, but for the information it furnishes as to the feelings entertained about him by the men of the sixteenth century. "I marvel to consider this," wrote the martyrologist, "how "that the bishops, condemning and abolishing all man-"ner of English books and treatises which might bring "the people to any light of knowledge, did yet author-"ize the works of Chaucer to remain still and to be oc-

[1] See vol. i., p. 134.

"cupied; who, no doubt, saw in religion as much almost
"as ever we do now, and uttereth in his works no less,
"and seemeth to be a right Wicklevian, or else there
"was never any, and that all his works almost, if they
"be thoroughly advised, will testify (albeit it be done
"in mirth and covertly), and especially the latter end
"of his third book of the 'Testament of Love;' for
"there purely he toucheth the highest matter, that is,
"the Communion; wherein, except a man be altogether
"blind, he may espy him at the full. Although in the
"same book (as in all other he useth to do) under shad-
"ows covertly, as under a visor, he suborneth truth in
"such sort, as both privily she may profit the godly-
"minded, and yet not be espied of the crafty adversary.
"And therefore the bishops belike taking his work but
"for jests and toys, in condemning other books, yet
"permitted his books to be read.

"So it pleased God then to blind the eyes of them,
"for the more commodity of his people, to the intent
"that through the reading of his treatises, some fruit
"might redound thereof to his church, as no doubt it
"did to many. As also I am partly informed of cer-
"tain which knew the parties, which to them reported
"that by reading of Chaucer's works they were brought
"to the true knowledge of religion: and not unlike to
"be true; for to omit the other parts of his volume,
"whereof some are more fabulous than other, what tale
"can be more plainly told than the tale of the Plowman?
"Or what finger can point out more directly the Pope
"with his prelates to be Antichrist, than doth the poor
"pelican reasoning against the greedy griffin? Under

"which hypotyposis or poesy, who is so blind that seeth
"not by the pelican the doctrine of Christ, and of the
"Lollards to be defended against the church of Rome?
"Or, who is so impudent that can deny that to be true
"which the pelican there affirmeth in describing the
"presumptuous pride of that pretended church? Again,
"what egg can be more like, or fig, unto another, than
"the words, properties, and conditions of that ravenous
"griffin resembleth the true image, that is the nature
"and qualities of that which we call the church of Rome
"in every point and degree? And therefore no great
"marvel if that narration was exempted out of the
"copies of Chaucer's works; which, notwithstanding,
"now is restored again, and is extant for every man to
"read that is disposed."[1]

This extraordinary enrolment of Chaucer among the spiritual fathers of the English Reformation was principally based, as is seen by the extract just given, upon the spurious tale of the Plowman. The belief long survived the evidence to which it owed its origin. The poet's position as a defender of the faith continued to be steadily upheld in the century that followed. It was favored by men who had no sympathy whatever with the extreme tenets of the earlier leaders of the revolt against the Roman church. A sketch of Chaucer, left in manuscript, by the well-known Henry Wharton was prepared by him as an addition to Cave's 'Ecclesiastical Writers.' In this we are informed that the poet came to the acquisition and the exhibition of true and genuine piety, and was scarcely excelled by any theo-

[1] Edition of 1583, vol. ii., p. 839.

logian of his time in his zeal for a purer religion. Views of this sort, it hardly needs to be added, do not presuppose a too intimate acquaintance with his productions. They are interesting to us rather as relics of a past belief than as possessed of any living importance. Religious controversies have so died away in our age that spiritual honors are no longer so easily accorded. No one is now inclined to reckon Chaucer among the saints. No one is now engaged in circulating his writings with the object of converting men to the true faith. Those of the present day who stand as sponsors even of his Protestantism are content to rate him as a follower, and not as a leader. This, however, is almost the only point in which the modern advocates of the belief in question differ with their predecessors. They insist as positively as the men of the sixteenth century upon his hostile attitude to the church of Rome. They are as eager as were they to bring into the closest possible community of feeling the two great representatives of the religious and of the literary awakening that had started into being at about the same time. No one, since Tyrwhitt's denial of its authenticity, has ventured to include the 'Plowman's Tale' among Chaucer's writings. It no longer appears in any edition of his works. The belief that was born of it ought therefore to have died with it. Yet, later ages that have refused to accept the poem as genuine have followed former ages in accepting the view of his opinions which the rejected poem had the principal influence in building up and propagating.

But while this belief has survived the belief that gave

it being, it has sought to maintain itself in other ways. Deprived of the particular weapon of the 'Plowman's Tale,' it has had recourse to passages in his undisputed writings. There are many of these which certainly furnish a good deal of matter highly acceptable to those who dislike the Roman church. Attacks upon different orders of the clergy in the way of covert insinuation or of open satire, or more commonly still in the simple recital of discreditable facts, are scattered throughout his poems. There are passages that would give the impression, if taken by themselves, that their author was filled with feelings of contempt for the men who then swayed the destinies of the church, and for the measures by which it was guided. The difficulty with these is, that they prove too much. Attacks made upon all those engaged in the enforcement of ecclesiastical authority or connected with the service of religion were the attacks not of the individual, but of the time. They were part of the regular stock-in-trade of all writers. The laziness and luxury of the monks, the greed and licentiousness of the friars, the frauds of the pardoners, the general scoundrelism of the summoners, were too common topics for invective to subject upon that account the one indulging in it to the charge of being specially intent upon the reformation of the church, or specially indignant at its corruptions. Chaucer, in describing the misdoings of his clerical characters, used only the commonest of commonplaces about them. It is a strained inference to make him a Wycliffite because his genius enabled him to use them with more skill and effect than others. If attacks in particular upon the

avarice and immorality of the friars prove a man a follower of the great Reformer, there were many Wycliffites before the Reformer was born. The satirical literature of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is full of the grossest charges against their character. It does not take the shape of vague insinuation, but of direct assertion.

The bitterest denunciation of abuses in the church can, moreover, be found in the writings of men most devoted to its interests. It is love that censures full as often as hate, and the fault-finder is not necessarily an enemy or a destroyer. Langland's attacks upon the corruptions of the clerical orders are fervent, as might well be expected from a man who was a Puritan two hundred years before Puritanism existed under that name. But no reader of the 'Vision of Piers Plowman' need to be informed of the attachment of its author to the established faith. Gower felt as bitterly about the corruptions of the church as did Chaucer, and in all probability more bitterly. He had not the lightness of touch to make his comments interesting to the reader, nor had he the vigor of blow which would make it painful to the subject. But while he is more prosy, he is just as earnest. The prologue to his work is full of lamentation about the divisions that exist in the church of Christ and the corruptions that had crept through the whole body of the clergy. Yet he attacks even more severely "the new sect of lollardy." He declares that it has its origin from Antichrist, and advises men to hold fast to the faith of their fathers, and not listen to those known to be un-

holy who are planting doubt in the minds of their hearers.[1]

The truth is, there is nothing in Chaucer's genuine writings to furnish any ground for reckoning him among the followers of Wycliffe. The belief was born of the wish, and has been kept alive by it. So far as it exists now, it is due to a misconception of his language based upon a misconception of his character. No two men, in truth, could have been selected who were more utterly dissimilar in the constitution of their minds and in their ways of looking at life. It is the poet with whom we are dealing here. The moment we come to comprehend clearly what manner of man he was, the claim that he was ever consciously a Reformer, or the follower of a Reformer, assumes at once almost the nature of an impossibility, and even of an absurdity. Chaucer, as there has been frequent occasion to point out, is first and foremost a man of letters. Other parts which he plays are mere accidents. This constitutes his essential character. Accordingly, he looks upon all the social and political phenomena of his time from the comparatively passionless position of a man of letters who happened to be also a man of genius. There is nothing that escapes his view, but there is likewise nothing that heats his temper. The literary element in his writings predominates so decisively that the polemic, even if it appear at all, sinks to an utterly unnoticed place in the background. The satirical ingredient in his nature, pervasive and potent as

[1] It is noticeable that he uses in regard to them the same phrase which Chaucer puts into the mouth of the Shipman,

"To sowe cockel with the corn."

—Vol. ii., p. 190 (Pauli).

it is, is held under control so completely, is kept in an abeyance so strict, that we in modern times are in danger of underrating rather than of overrating its effectiveness. These characteristics of the poet throw him at once out of alliance with the men who are aiming at reforming the world, or any portion of it. He may have seen, and doubtless did see, its evils as clearly as others; but he was not the one to set about the task of its regeneration, or to denounce with bitterness those who had brought it into the condition in which it was.

His writings bear out this view fully. There is nowhere in them any exhibition of that ill-nature which is inclined to disguise itself in the shape of moral indignation. Equally, again, there is nothing of the fierce intolerance which makes the fanatic feel that his enemies are God's enemies, and that in smiting them hip and thigh he is doing nothing but God's service. There is not in a single line of his poems a trace of the acrimony of the controversialist, scarcely even, it may be thought, of the earnestness of the believer. If he loved God, he did not make the feeling offensive to his neighbor. If he hated iniquity, he kept his detestation of it pretty carefully to himself. So far is he from denouncing it, that he brings before us his villains of every station without a word of reprobation. He reveals their iniquity, or makes them reveal it themselves. But nowhere does he, when speaking in his own person, exhibit the slightest emotion of any sort. For his religious rascals he seems, in fact, to have had a sort of liking; at any rate, he has invariably something to say in their favor. His monk, given up to the pleasures of life and

devoted in particular to hunting, is "a manly man," "a fair prelate," well fitted, indeed, to hold the position of an abbot. His friar, a fawner upon the rich, a despiser of the poor, is a merry and delightful companion. His pardoner, carrying about his pretended relics and plundering alike parson and people, "is in church a noble ecclesiast." His summoner, a drunken scoundrel, is "a gentle harlot and a kind." This is not the spirit exhibited by men who desire to remodel the existing condition of the universe, or feel a deep dislike to the way its affairs are carried on. The world, in truth, in spite of the personal privations he underwent, clearly struck Chaucer as being, on the whole, a very satisfactory world. That it was not a perfect one in his eyes, he lets us indirectly see. Still, so little is he of a reformer that he has not even the reformer's belief in the necessity of uttering his beliefs.

There are those to whom the poet's character will in this view appear low if not ignoble. His religious indifference will seem to them as detestable as was to many of his countrymen the political indifference of Goethe. The picture in their eyes is a painful one. To some it is probably a revolting one. They will accept it only because they are driven to do so by the weight of evidence contained in his own words. For them no intellectual excellence can compensate for the lack of moral qualities which may not be essential to the highest type of poetry, but are to the highest type of manhood. Herein, as they look at the matter, Chaucer fails. He lacks earnestness. He lacks the capacity of righteous indignation at things at which men ought to be indig-

nant. He has reached that degree of tolerance of other men's opinions that he has ceased to feel that there is any essential difference between right and wrong. His is the sleek, well-fed, comfortable view of life of the man who, while himself shrinking, perhaps, from the commission of evil, looks with indifference upon the commission of evil by others. To such persons the tragedy of life is little more than a stage-tragedy into which the real character of the actors does not enter; nor does the character of their acts involve moral condemnation. Contrasted with the tremendous standard of a born religious leader like Wycliffe, Chaucer's conduct, therefore, appears to them at a great disadvantage. He has buried his talents in a napkin. He has thereby defrauded not only his own generation, but the generations after him, of the moral profit they had a right to expect from the possession of unusual powers intrusted to his keeping.

This is, perhaps, a natural feeling. Yet it seems to me an utterly mistaken one. It is asking the poet to be something which it was not in his nature to be, to do something which it was not in his power to do. He was, I repeat, a man of letters, and as a man of letters he must be judged. His business was the portrayal of men as they are, and not the effort to make them what they ought to be, or what he thought they ought to be. So far as Chaucer had any conscious aim at all, it was to mirror the life of his day, and not to reform its morals. It may be deemed by some that it would have been more to his credit to have devoted himself to the active propagation of a purer faith. By this course he would very surely have done violence to his artistic sense and

have wasted his creative power. The gain to religion would have been very doubtful. The loss to literature would certainly have been enormous. He knew far better than any possible censurer what was the work he was fitted to accomplish. It was to his success in completing the task he set before himself that we know the inner life of his time as we know no other period in early English history.

Nor was this way of looking at things, it may be said in passing, confined to matters of religion. His position is no different in respect to the other questions which agitated the men of his time. He has views about liberty and aristocracy, and he expresses them unhesitatingly. He speaks with contempt of the gentility that is based upon position and descent, and not upon character. But his contempt is invariably good-humored, and little calculated to provoke resentment. His opinions are purely literary. While he does not hesitate to express them, he shows no desire to commit others to them, nor does he exhibit bitterness towards those who entertained sentiments which he must have looked upon as little better than monstrous. There were events taking place in his time about which he could hardly have failed to think much and to feel deeply. But there is no evidence of excitement in anything he says. He refers to incidents connected with the insurrection of the commons; he records the scenes of tumult and violence which attended the murder of the foreign workmen. But it is the bare fact only that is mentioned. In his passionless pages no word of praise or blame is to be found. This, indeed, exemplifies his characteristic attitude towards all

questions that are not connected primarily with literature. In so bearing himself, Chaucer assuredly followed the course most in accordance with his nature and inclinations. It may be also that he adopted it because he recognized his own limitations. There were certain things he was not fitted to do, and these he did not attempt to do. He was no knight errant, fighting the battles of a persecuted faith, or hastening to the succor of a side struggling against great odds. He was clearly conscious that it is not given to all of us to be leaders of forlorn hopes or champions of doubtful causes.

But though this calmness, this apparent indifference to what, perhaps, seemed to his contemporaries the burning questions of the hour, may have been to some of them a source of irritation, it does not follow that it was not, after all, the most effective way he could have used to inculcate the very opinions which they had most at heart, but for the reception of which the time was not yet ripe. Perhaps, in a sense they themselves little understood, the Reformers of the sixteenth century did have a right to reckon Chaucer among their forerunners, though the method he pursued was as little like that of Wycliffe as his spirit was like their own. Let it be granted that he lacked earnestness. But the earnestness of one age is apt to appear undue, if not unworthy, excitement to the age that follows. Its severity of speech seems to border on brutality; its fierce controversies sound little better than brawling. Its satire is often felt to be unjustifiable, even if it be understood. When indignation, as the Roman poet said, makes the verse, the verse is little apt to receive commendation

or exert influence after the object that arouses the indignation has passed away. Even in its own age, its very bitterness often repels, and sometimes disgusts. It was not in Chaucer's nature to be bitter. It did not accord with his purposes to express moral reprobation. But it is a question if the very absence of the qualities that excite irritation and opposition did not make him more effective in bringing about the results at which the Reformers aimed than could have been accomplished by the most impassioned and flaming invectives. He lived and moved in the dry light of the literary atmosphere, free from the passions that stirred the hearts of his contemporaries and the prejudices that warped their judgments. To his own time, as well as to later times, he must have appeared in the character of an absolutely impartial observer. In his pages stands clearly revealed the utter worldliness that swayed the lives of men that professed to be governed by spiritual motives alone. The perpetual contrast between precept and practice is not made less noticeable, it is made more so, by its apparent failure to inspire the poet with indignation. The exposure of the corruption prevailing in the church reached the largest possible circle of minds, because its author had no tenets to enforce and felt no mission to reform. The weapons he wielded were none the less formidable in their effect though they were not aimed at persons or practices with intent to hold them up to detestation. The men who in the one case would have been the first to resent condescended to be amused. It is the apparent artlessness with which the Summoner, the Pardoner, and the Friar reveal the rascality of themselves or of

each other that prevented at the time the victim of the attack from feeling the deadly nature of the blow that had been struck.

Still, there are significant tokens, as the Roman church approached near its downfall in England, that to some at least the destructive nature of the little-heeded agency had become obvious. It aroused, as we have seen in the quotation from Fox, the surprise of the Reformers of the sixteenth century at the blindness of the bishops in suffering the poet's works to be read and circulated. It lends a color of probability to the statement of the antiquary Thynne, that in an open parliament, as he had heard a member of the House report, the writings of Chaucer came near to being prohibited, and would have been condemned had it not been that they were counted nothing but fables.[1] It is certain that his productions and those of Gower were exempted by name from the operation of the act of parliament of the 34th and 35th of Henry VIII. (1542–3), which was passed, as was expressed in its title, for the advancement of true religion and the abolishment of the contrary. This forbade the circulation of various works. The 'Canterbury Tales' and others of the poet's writings were included among those to which the act did not extend, unless a special proclamation for their condemnation was issued by the king. This, to be sure, was after Henry had broken with Rome. Still, the specific mention of Chaucer's productions certainly gives the impression that the question of their prohibition had at some previous time been mooted, and that there were those to whom the matter contained

[1] See vol. i., p. 463.

in these poems was not altogether pleasing. We are, in truth, liable to underrate their influence because our attention is no longer attracted to the things that in the eyes of our ancestors were of supremest importance. Chaucer assuredly blew no trumpet-blast to stir the hearts of thousands. But while the doctrines of Wycliffe went out in fire and blood, the slow and sapping irony of the 'Canterbury Tales' worked continuously unheeded and unchecked, and often, indeed, cherished by the very men it destroyed. It was not virulence that affected this result, but the absence of it. Chaucer in his satire, indeed, resembles his own graphic picture of the assassin as "the smiler with the knife under the cloak." The victim falls dead even before the hand is seen that strikes the blow.

But while the work of these two great representatives of the religious and of the literary life of the times may have had the same general tendency, there is no reason to suppose that it was inspired by the same or even similar motives. The points of divergence in details are as numerous as are the points of agreement. In some instances they are far more striking. There is nothing whatever in the poet of that vague unrest that must have lain at the heart of the professed followers of the Reformer that they were men born before their time. Yet it is quite conceivable that with some of Wycliffe's tenets Chaucer may have sympathized. With them he probably did sympathize. The contest which was going on in his day was in large measure between those who wished to subordinate the church to the state, and those eager to subordinate the state to the church.

Though hid under other names, it was essentially a contest between the spiritual and the military order. The latter was essentially the same thing as the aristocracy. These were the two great powers in the social and political life of the times. Though sometimes acting in unison, there was always between them secret rivalry and occasionally open hostility. Against the brute strength of the feudal nobility the only effective agency was the power of the church. The enmity constantly cropping out between the two was provocative of bitter controversy, of discreditable intrigues, and sometimes of personal violence. It was a quarrel always going on in the development of the feudal system and of the papacy. Its presence was, therefore, neither confined to the time of Chaucer nor to his native land. But in the latter half of the fourteenth century it had become especially aggravated in England. Wycliffe stood forth as the champion of the state. For a time he was supported by a large body of the nobility, because he brought against the pretensions of the papal church all the resources of a trained intellect, stored with wide learning and inspired with a passionate love of country. His great protector was John of Gaunt, the patron of Chaucer himself. No one will pretend that that nobleman was actuated by religious motives. He took the part of the Reformer for political reasons and not for spiritual ones. It has not been deemed necessary to regard him on that account as profoundly interested in the propagation of a purer Christian faith.

The case is really no different with Chaucer himself. He was a soldier, and his sympathies lay naturally with

the military order. Many of the tenets of Wycliffe found favor with the class with which he had become affiliated. There is no reason to suspect that in this matter he differed from his brothers in arms. Their likes and dislikes he shared. As these were frequently the likes and dislikes of the Reformer also, it would be no matter of wonder that upon many points the views of both should be in harmony. It is certainly only in this way that Chaucer can be characterized as a follower of Wycliffe. This, however, is a distinction which he was likely to have enjoyed with a number of persons who would have been as much astounded as their friends to learn that future times would look upon them as burning and shining lights in the religious world. Actuated by feelings of this kind, the poet would naturally take and present the most unfavorable view of the clerical body, and a correspondingly favorable one of the military. In the Prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales,' the parish priest is the only member of the former class who is depicted in a highly favorable light. Even in the revelation of his character in the course of the narrative a certain intellectual narrowness can be noted, though it is suggested rather than imputed.

It is quite different when Chaucer comes to treat of the representatives of the military order. The description he gives of them marks plainly his sympathies, though it also shows that these sympathies impaired not in the slightest the clearness of his intellectual vision. His point of view is distinctly favorable. There was doubtless then a satisfactory number of scoundrels among the nobility. But it is not from that section

that he cares to select his characters. His knights, whether they are called Greeks or Trojans, are invariably the men of his own time. They have the virtues and the vices of their class. But it is the former alone that are made prominent. Chaucer's feelings about them are specially revealed in the Prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales.' His praises of the representatives of the military order are unreserved, and in the character of the Yeoman extend even to the rank and file. The Knight, as there drawn, is the ideal soldier and gentleman. Even his Christianity is, in its way, of a higher type than that of its professed representatives. He has fought for the spread of the faith, in lands the most diverse, against people the most hostile to its claims. Everywhere renowned for his wisdom and his prowess, he is as much renowned for his courtesy. His crowning merit, indeed, is his consideration for the feelings of others, no matter what their station in life. As the poet tells us,

> "He never yet no villainy[1] ne said
> In all his life unto no manner wight."[2]

In days when double negatives added force to the expression, Chaucer found it necessary to crowd four of them into two lines to indicate in the strongest possible way the charm of manner which was the chief characteristic of the knightly character, the chivalric courtesy which, while guarding the man's own dignity, respected fully the rights and feelings of the lowest with whom he was brought into personal contact.

But Chaucer is too calm an observer of life to go into

[1] Discourteous or abusive language. [2] No kind of person.

extremes or to suffer his sympathies to cloud his judgment. His affiliation with the members of the military class did not blind him to their defects. There is plainly to be traced in him something of the feeling, often to be observed in modern works of fiction, which represents the members of the nobility as being good-hearted but also thick-headed. This is noticeable in 'Troilus and Cressida.' But in Chaucer, while this feeling unquestionably exists, it never manifests itself offensively. He assumes the fact of inferior intellectual capacity. But it is only because it is in accordance with the fitness of things that this should be the case. To a man whose profession was to knock people on the head, strength of muscle was ordinarily more essential than strength of mind. Brains could be left to those who had need of them in order to get along in life. They were not required for those whose position was already assured. Hence it is that there is not the slightest trace of ill-nature in his failure to make prominent the mental capacity of his military heroes. They, indeed, had no hesitation in confessing their own lack of it, for with them intellectual dignity was not essential to knightly dignity. Arcite speaks of himself as 'uncunning.' Troilus admits to Pandarus that he is 'lewd'—that is, ignorant. But there were other things in which the knight cannot fail, and upon them the poet insists strongly. He must be a man of honor, he must be a man of courage; above all, he must be a gentleman in his feelings, his instincts, and his aspirations. He might be stupid; it was incumbent upon him to be chivalrous. If his virtues were heroic, his vices accordingly had to be of

the same stamp. They must be of a bold and open sort. The knight could be licentious and arrogant and even cruel; the thing forbidden him was to be petty and mean and false.

It is intellectual clearness of vision that enabled Chaucer to recognize the defects of the knightly character, while he gratified his feelings by portraying its better side. It is the same intellectual clearness that enabled him to appreciate the life of purity, of self-sacrifice, and of devotion in another which he might not have had the inclination or ability to follow himself. It is this, and not religious sympathy, that led him to draw his famous portrait of the Parson of the town in the Prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales.' That the picture stood for the great Reformer there was never the slightest ground for asserting, though perhaps nothing in connection with it has been more frequently asserted. That the poet, no matter what his belief, should have the fullest intellectual perception of the moral beauty and grandeur of such a character can easily be assumed. It is one of a kind to which even the rankest infidelity has always paid either willing or grudging homage. That Chaucer also may have had with it a spiritual sympathy is, of course, not impossible. It was doubtless intentional on his part that the man whose character he drew should belong to the secular clergy as opposed to the regular, and that his life of self-denial should be put in marked contrast with theirs of self-indulgence. But this is something quite distinct from selecting as the one who sat for the portrait his great contemporary. Men of holy life, of fervent faith, of lofty ideals have not been so rare, it is to

be hoped, in any period since the founding of the Christian church, that the picture of a typical representative of the class must be assumed to be that of one particular man. What evidence upon the subject exists—and it is certainly of the scantiest—would point, if in any way, to an opposite conclusion. At the time the Prologue was presumably written, Wycliffe had been dead for several years. Nor are several of the details in the lives and characters of the poetical and the historic figure in very exact harmony. The Parson of the sketch belongs to the lowliest station in life. He is the brother of the Plowman. He is poor by birth and remains poor by choice. He walks from one end of his parish to the other in all sorts of weather. Wycliffe, doubtless, could have done all this, had there been need. There is no reason, however, to suppose that he ever felt the need. Besides, things are said in the course of the 'Canterbury Tales' which could hardly have been said either of or to the Reformer. There is in places a tone adopted about the Parson of the town in which Chaucer himself would not have ventured to indulge had the great religious leader been in his thoughts. For the poet at times exhibits a consciousness of intellectual superiority to the parish priest which leads him to jest about him, to resent after a fashion the pronounced puritanism attributed to him, and to make it clear that, while a character of the kind he has depicted excites in certain ways his admiration, he recognizes just as distinctly its intellectual limitations. There is, indeed, nothing which would lead us to believe that the portrait of the village Parson represents any one but him whom it purports to represent.

The man whom Chaucer had in mind was one of the class of humbler curates who are content to lead lives of obscurity and find their chief happiness in doing good.

Chaucer's views accordingly, so far as they are connected at all with those of Wycliffe, can easily be summed up in a few sentences. He sympathized with the military party in the state, as opposed to the ecclesiastical. In the divisions prevailing in the church, he sympathized with the secular clergy as opposed to the regular. In the case of the two principal bodies constituting the latter, his hostility was greater towards the friars than towards the monks—so far, at least, as we are justified in imputing to him any feeling of the nature of hostility. Upon all these points he doubtless approached Wycliffe and all those who shared in Wycliffe's sentiments. This agreement in opinion, however, is very far from making him a follower of the Reformer. It is, in fact, an easy matter to dispose of any claim of this kind. But the moment we leave the question of what he was not, and come to consider the question of what he was, we are leaving a region of comparative certainty for one little better than that of pure conjecture. We are ignorant of his personal surroundings and of the circumstances under which he was placed. We know nothing positively of his actual attitude towards the church. It is therefore only from the general nature of his mind, and from occasional remarks coming directly from himself, or indirectly imputed by him to others, that we can infer what may have been his views. These are, however, very far from sufficient to justify us in asserting what they must have been. We are in

perpetual danger of putting upon his words an interpretation they were not intended to bear. In particular, we are liable to regard various utterances as the expression of settled conviction, which were nothing but the mere ebullitions of momentary feeling.

At the outset it is to be remarked that for this investigation little aid is received from the poems of a purely religious character. Of these, besides those contained in the 'Canterbury Tales,' there are no more than two, and perhaps but one. The authorship of the prayer to the Virgin beginning "Mother of God and Virgin Undefouled" is disputed between Chaucer and Occleve. By whomsoever written, it furnishes no special evidence as to belief. The same remark is true of the beautiful orison that goes under the name of the 'A. B. C.,' which stands on a distinctly higher level of achievement. This poem, though a translation or rather a paraphrase, has all the beauty of an original. The arrangement which requires the verses to begin with the successive letters of the alphabet is, of course, an artifice; but it is of too slight a texture to trammel the genius of the poet. In his great work there are three stories that are of a distinctly religious character—at least, they are of that religious character which is exemplified in the mediæval lives of saints and martyrs. These are the tale of St. Cecilia, told by the Second Nun; the tale of Constance, told by the Man of Law; and the tale told by the Prioress. None of the three are of much value for the insight they give us into Chaucer's religious opinions. Their main interest lies in the view they exhibit of the development of his poetical method in the treatment

of themes essentially similar. Their literary aspect is therefore much more important than their religious. In the latter there is, in fact, nothing distinctive. So far as that is concerned, they might have been the production of any monkish writer of the time. It is not improbable that in composing them the poet, like any modern author, had largely in view his audience. They are exactly in the strain that would commend them to whatever religious reading public there was in the Middle Ages. To the men of our day they, or at least two of them, can hardly be deemed highly interesting. They appeal to feelings that have now lost their influence, and to beliefs that have died out entirely. Nor is their literary merit such as to command a respect which is denied to their matter. They all exhibit throughout Chaucer's beauty of versification, and in places his pathos; but in not one of them is his power displayed in the highest degree. Yet, in an examination of his religious opinions, they must be made to give up whatever evidence they contain. This necessitates the consideration of these poems both as regards their subject and the author's mode of treatment.

The first of the three—the Second Nun's tale of St. Cecilia—is much the feeblest of all in point of execution. It is itself a translation. It is a translation also which belongs pretty certainly to the period of Chaucer's youth. It was included by him in his great work with so little revision that, though it is put into the mouth of a woman, she speaks of herself as an "unworthy son of Eve."[1] Again, though it is supposed to

[1] Line 62.

be related to hearers, the character to whom it is assigned represents herself in one place as addressing readers.[1] It is, moreover, distinguished from the others by adhering with scrupulous fidelity to its sources. It consequently introduces none of those peculiar touches by which Chaucer usually modified or changed the character of his originals. Still, its chief interest to us is the picture it presents of the pattern upon which the stories of the saints were built. To modern readers there is always about them something of a grotesque and even absurd character. To suppose that Chaucer was insensible to these features would be to deny him the possession of a perspicacity that he displays elsewhere in a pre-eminent degree. At the same time, there is nowhere in his narratives anything to suggest that one of their most salient peculiarities had made an impression, least of all a ludicrous impression, upon his mind. For among this class of mediæval stories there is one strong point of resemblance. In the lives of the saints and martyrs, one miracle connected with their death is generally wrought, and but one. This is, however, of a character sufficiently stupendous. The fire will not burn, the water will not drown, the sword refuses to pierce, the axe declines to behead. The persecutor does not, therefore, succeed in his first attempt. But so far from being daunted by the interposition of almighty power, he is only made more obstinately determined in the pursuit of his purpose by the unwillingness of nature to perform her regular functions. He hardens his heart. When the first method of destruc-

[1] Line 78.

tion fails, he resorts unhesitatingly to another. His assumed state of mind is accurately depicted in the words which Dryden, in one of his extravagant heroic plays, represents as uttered by the imperial persecutor of a female saint:

> "If not by sword, then she shall die by fire,
> And one by one her miracles I'll tire."[1]

On the other hand, Heaven is generally contented with the single exhibition of energy it has put forth. It has granted one deliverance. With that, Providence has either exhausted its power to save or has abandoned its intention. Of the crown of martyrdom, the future saint is not to be deprived. The destined victim is accordingly handed over to "our first foe, the serpent Sathanas," as the Prioress calls him, who has henceforth undisturbed leave to work his will.

This popular form of the legendary story is fully exemplified by Chaucer in the life of St. Cecilia. It suffers no modification, and it receives no improvement. The crudeness of the original is nowhere relieved by the art of the poet in placing the grotesque element of the tale in the background and in bringing to the front the motives and feelings with which the men of all times and all creeds could have sympathized. Instead of that, whatever is unnatural and extravagant, and even displeasing from the point of view of literature, if not of life, is made prominent. The first attempt to effect the death of the martyr heroine is, as usual, a miserable failure. During a night and day fires are kept up about her body. She remains, however, perfectly cool in the place

[1] *Tyrannic Love*, act v., scene 1.

of torment. So far from feeling any pain, she does not even perspire. Such a result in the real world would have made a minister of justice hesitate, especially a minister of justice of the kind the provost is represented to be before whom she is brought. He, though forced by his official duty to be a persecutor, behaves, it must be confessed, very much like a gentleman, while the manners of St. Cecilia could easily have been improved. But in the legendary world the original failure is an incentive to fresh effort rather than a deterrent. As fire will not burn her, the provost sentences her to fall under the axe of the executioner. Even this new agent is only partially successful. The three strokes, which are all the law allows him to give, fail to sever the head completely from the body. The martyr, therefore, continues to live three days half-dead, with her neck cut open, teaching the faith, and not forgetting to bestow her property upon the church.

The Man of Law's tale is a decided improvement upon this in the matter both of conception and of execution. The main interest is no longer concentrated upon the purely miraculous, but upon the human element in the story. The three hundred and fifty lines, not found in the immediate original, which Chaucer inserted in the story, are not, in all instances, of his own invention; but there are others, and these the most effective, that have every mark of having come directly from the poet himself. The satirical vein, which with him was always apt to make its appearance in most unexpected places, shows itself in even this most serious of poems. It is not obtrusive, but it is there. The

ironical lines to the effect that husbands are all good and have always been good, as their wives well know;[1] the sly allusion to women as the instruments that Satan invariably employs when he is seeking to beguile;[2] these, as might be expected, do not occur in the story as told by the Dominican friar from whom Chaucer borrowed the details of the narrative. Full as characteristic are the moralizing comments upon the varying fortunes of this life, as well as the pathetic lines in which Constance deplores the expulsion of herself and her child from the Northumberland kingdom. Passages like these raise the poem to a distinctly higher level than the tale of St. Cecilia. Yet it itself is surpassed by the tale of the Prioress. This story, worked up with consummate art, is much the best of the narratives that deal with matters of religion. While it lacks many of the higher qualities that are found in other of Chaucer's productions, it is perhaps exceeded by none of them in tenderness. The theme—the murder of an innocent Christian child by Jews—is not altogether an agreeable one for modern men to contemplate; for it teaches no lesson so powerfully as the folly and fanaticism of their ancestors. We need not suppose that Chaucer himself had the least belief in the absurd story that forms the groundwork of this pathetic piece. It is doubtless true, however, that in his time persons of education and position, such as was the Prioress, did believe tales of the sort. It is therefore in perfect accordance with propriety that she is made responsible for this particular narrative. Still, one cannot but regret that a man of

[1] Lines 174, 175.

[2] Lines 267–273.

the evident broad-mindedness of the poet should have allowed his genius to pander, for the sake of literary effect, to a cruel slander which, begotten of superstition, was kept alive by ignorance, more especially as his espousal of it could hardly fail to extend and aggravate the hatred already felt for a wretched and hunted race.

From none of these poems do we get any real knowledge of Chaucer's religious opinions. They prove his ability, if we stand in need of such proof, to enter into the feelings of other men. Yet they can scarcely be said to throw any light upon his own feelings. If we could look upon the pieces just described as furnishing evidence of any kind, there could hardly be escape from the conclusion that the poet was a loyal adherent of the Roman Catholic church, and accepted even its miraculous legends with as much faith as its formal creeds. But no genuine student of his writings could for a moment regard such a view as satisfactory. It is in too emphatic contradiction to the incidental revelations made of his opinions which are scattered up and down the rest of his works. In fact, before we can hope to arrive at a result that has even plausibility in its favor, it will be necessary to take into account the nature of the religious movements going on in his time, as well as the personality of the poet himself, and the extent of the influence that would naturally be exerted by the former upon the latter. Chaucer must in any case have been affected by the sentiments prevalent in his day. He must have yielded more or less to the pressure of that tyranny of drift from which characters the most exalted, intellectually and morally, can never wholly

escape. It is therefore desirable first to ascertain what were the tendencies, or rather what were certain of the tendencies, of religious belief to which he would be peculiarly exposed. For in investigations of this sort the personal equation becomes a factor of supreme importance. In the reflex workings of the two agencies we may perhaps hope to gain glimpses, at least, of the sentiments by which he was swayed.

While there is no ground for the assertion that Chaucer was a follower of Wycliffe in the sense commonly understood, it would be unreasonable to suppose that he was not affected by the influences which the teachings of the great Reformer had set in motion. It is probable that, directly or indirectly, they worked in various ways upon the minds of most men then living in England. Wycliffe's doctrines were, to a certain extent, revolutionary. They necessarily produced upon the minds of men all the effects which revolutionary movements cause to take place. They purified and intensified the faith of some, they loosened its hold in others. For the upheaval, and even disturbance, of established beliefs, whether in politics or morals or religion, is invariably attended with consequences that the assailant of the existing order neither desires nor intends. The revolt is often carried further than the projector contemplated, sometimes much further than later ages come to recognize as justifiable. About error long sanctified by time gathers a certain body of truth. The effort that must be made to uproot the former involves the painful result, for many minds, of sacrificing the latter. Tenets which have been held by all men

with the firmest faith cannot well be overthrown without unsettling for some men the foundations of all faith. There is often, moreover, a weakness in the hold of new convictions which have taken the place of those previously received. Like trees transplanted in full growth, they will not, for a while, have the sturdiness of those that have been left undisturbed. Time is required for their roots to strike down deep into the life, and accommodate themselves to the new conditions under which they have been placed. This is true of political dogmas and of the rules for personal conduct. The breaking-up of established ideas about government unsettles, for a particular class of minds, all ideas of social order whatever. Again, if certain beliefs, no matter how false, have long been associated with morality, the destruction of the beliefs will impair for a time the sanctions of morality for some, and for others will even overthrow them entirely. But the statement is especially true of the changes that take place in religious views. There is for a while after any reform, even if it assumes but remotely the shape of a revolution, a period in which men are swept hither and thither by every wind of doctrine. The house has been swept and garnished, but the new occupant has not as yet taken full possession. An interval of doubt, and even of despair, is always apt to prevail between the death of Pan and the reign of Christ. The result is, that at such times men seem largely to divide themselves into two classes—those who are trying to believe as much as they can, and those who are determined to believe as little as they dare. The one party is afraid

that the accepted faith may not be true. The other party is equally afraid that it may be.

Such a period was to some extent the latter half of the fourteenth century. While in many respects it was an age of superstition, it was very far from being an age of faith in the higher sense of the word. Men were breaking away from traditional beliefs. Doctrines accepted without question were beginning to be subjected to critical and often to hostile examination. Many things were treated with contempt which had once been held in profoundest reverence. There was frequently displayed that audacity in dealing with sacred subjects which is apt in particular to accompany the progress of rationalistic beliefs. Much of the transition of sentiment was due in its origin to the intense hostility which had been excited by the corruptions prevalent in the church. This had shown itself in various efforts at reform. On the part of Wycliffe, it had led to the denial of many things that had once been deemed essential to the faith of the true believer. There were those with whom the movement naturally did not stop at any fixed point. If a man broke with papal pretensions, it would seem to many that he was breaking with Christianity itself. Feelings of the same kind might in process of time extend to the individual concerned. He had been led to question various doctrines of the faith in which he had been brought up. The next step for him to take would be to question the faith itself. I am not maintaining that the scepticism went very far or very deep; but there is not only evidence of its prevalence, but of its prevalence in the very class with which Chaucer was in-

timately connected. Langland, with all the fervor of an earnest believer, attacks the manner in which the laity of high position, at feasts when the minstrels ceased playing, disputed against the clergy, and carped contemptuously at the doctrine of the Trinity. Rationalism lurks always latent in the loins of Arianism. We need not wonder, therefore, to find this poet further representing these same men as insisting upon the injustice and unreasonableness of holding the human race subject to destruction for the conduct of its first father. It is clear from his words that the feeling was widespread in the class of which he was speaking. Now, he says indignantly, every boy and every base fellow presumes to talk about the Trinity, and to invent shallow sophistries for impairing the faith.[1] While assertions of this sort do not necessarily imply that the scepticism thus stigmatized by a man of intense religious convictions was a general characteristic of the thought of the time, it does furnish fairly satisfactory evidence that it existed upon a large scale in the class which occupied high social position. Chaucer, therefore, could not have failed to be exposed to its influence. In order to ascertain how he would be affected by it we must, accordingly, endeavor to gain a clear conception of his general intellectual characteristics. It is to this branch of inquiry that attention is now to be directed.

The first, and for us the most important, point to be noted is the thoroughly critical attitude of the poet's mind. Perhaps it would be more correct to call it the sceptical attitude. By this is not meant the position

[1] *Piers the Plowman*, vol. i., pp. 288 and 292 (ed. Skeat).

which he assumed towards religion, but towards all the subjects that would naturally present themselves for consideration in his day. In his way of looking at things, he is a man of modern times rather than of the Middle Ages. He is singularly free from all the opinions which superstition, or science falsely so called, had imposed upon many, and perhaps upon most, of his contemporaries. He accepts no views upon mere authority. He treats with avowed contempt many widely accepted beliefs, though some of them were received unquestioningly by men of later generations, and all of them found favor occasionally with men of a high intellectual grade. We see this characteristic in his views about what purport to be statements of fact. Take his attitude, for instance, towards the history of King Arthur. Down to the close of the sixteenth century, and even later, the exploits of that monarch as well as those of the mythical Brutus, to whose race he was represented as belonging, were gravely recorded as veritable occurrences by the annalists who chronicled the story of Britain. It is clear that Chaucer rejected the narrative wholly when few ever doubted it at all. He possibly went further than the most critical of modern scholars would be willing to follow. From the opening of the Wife of Bath's tale it is evident that he looked with distrust, if not with absolute disbelief, upon the actual existence of the king himself. Tyrwhitt, indeed, expressed his fear that Chaucer had no more faith in the reality of Arthur than he had in that of the fairy queen whom he celebrated in the same passage. It was certainly actual contempt for the legendary tales that had grown up about the Briton mon-

arch that could enable him to say that his own story of the cock and fox was

> "as true, I undertake,[1]
> As is the book of Lancelot de Lake,
> That women hold in full great reverénce."[2]

Let us take up, in the next place, his attitude towards judicial astrology. Belief in it was widespread, both then and long afterwards. It numbered among its adherents many high in station and in ability. The weakness in regard to it displayed by the cruel and crafty Louis XI. of France is familiar to all readers of 'Quentin Durward.' Three centuries after Chaucer flourished, Dryden can be found accepting it as a genuine science.[3] Nor did the credulity of the later poet lack the countenance of some of the most distinguished men of his own and of the preceding age. Clearly it was not education, not intellectual power, not even lateness of time, that could save any one from falling a victim to this particular delusion. Nor in the case of Chaucer was his freedom from it due to his ignorance of the subject or to his indifference about it. On the contrary, it was one in which he took profound interest. In all the details of it he was thoroughly versed. The influence exerted by the stars over the destinies of men, the positions they occupy when manifesting their least or highest power, are matters used by him constantly either in the way of illustration or for the sake of literary effect. He at times preached the truth of the so-called science in the most

[1] Affirm.
[2] *Nun's Priest's tale*, line 393.
[3] Malone's *Life of Dryden*, p. 419.

positive terms. Certain it is, he tells us in 'Troilus and Cressida,' that it is the heavenly bodies which rule our lives, though why it is they do so is hidden from mortal sight.[1] In the Man of Law's tale, the same doctrine is repeated explicitly in a passage from another source added by Chaucer himself to the original he was translating.[2] A belief of this kind is, indeed, implied constantly in his writings even where not directly asserted. Were we to draw any inference from most of the places in which judicial astrology is mentioned, we should be led irresistibly to the conclusion that the poet was a firm believer in this particular form of folly. But here again the sceptical habit of his mind asserts itself. He uses the tenets and the terminology of the science for illustration and for effect; but it is for these things only that he uses them. The result is that in his poetry Chaucer has the appearance of being a full believer in judicial astrology. Nor is it impossible that there may have been a period in his life when he accepted its doctrines. But in his prose, where he is speaking in his own person, he records his disbelief. He there takes pains to set us right upon this point, as if he were jealous of his own reputation for judgment. In his treatise upon the 'Astrolabe,'[3] he explains to his son the meaning of the ascendant of a planet, for the avowed reason that it is a thing to which astrologers pay great heed in all nativities and in questions of elections of times. But he is careful to append to it a remark in which the incredulity expressed borders upon contempt. "These," he says, "be observances of judicial matter and rites of pagans

[1] Book ii., 614–620. [2] Lines 92–107. [3] Part ii., sec. 4.

in which my spirit ne hath no faith ne no knowing of here[1] horoscopum." Sentiments of a similar nature can even be detected in the poetry of the Franklin's tale.

There is, moreover, a precisely similar attitude of mind displayed towards all the common superstitious beliefs of his time which imply the interposition of supernatural, or at least of preternatural, agencies. It would be unfair to place much stress upon the passage in the Parson's tale in which these are denounced. It itself is probably also not original. In it, too, while the execration of the church is directly invoked upon all who put their faith in observances of this sort, there is a curious concession of the possibility that charms for the ailments of men and animals may be suffered by God to possess some efficacy. Still, the contemptuous tone in which Chaucer speaks of these practices could hardly have been otherwise than the reflection of his own real feelings. "What say we," he wrote, "of hem[2] that believe in divinails as by flight, or by noise of birds or of beasts, or by sort, by geomancy, by dreams, by chirking of doors, or cracking of houses, by gnawing of rats, and such manner of wretchedness? Certes all this thing is defended[3] by God and by all holy church, for which they be accursed till they come to amendment that on such filth set here[1] belief. Charms for wounds or malady of men or of beasts, if they take any effect, it be peradventure that God suffereth it, for folk should give the more faith and reverence to his name."[4] It is noticeable that Chaucer speaks in a similar disdainful tone of feats of natural magic in the very tale—that told by the Frank-

[1] Their. [2] Them. [3] Forbidden. [4] Vol. ii., p. 202 (ed. Gilman).

lin—in which the action of the piece turns upon a feat of natural magic. It seems as if for once the sceptical attitude of the man had prevailed over the artistic sense of the poet. He is unable to hide his contempt for the "superstitious cursedness," as he terms it,[1] which it is essential to the success of the story as a story that the reader or listener should, for the time being, accept as true. One of the characters in the piece is represented as having seen a book of natural magic. It is in this way that the poet expresses himself in regard to its contents. This book, he tells us,

> "Spake muchel of the operatiónsTouching the eight and twenty mansiónsThat longen to the moon, and such follý As in our dayès is not worth a fly."[2]

There is again the position of Chaucer in regard to alchemy. Belief in alchemy is perhaps the one delusion which has resulted in being a benefit to mankind by the very fact of its being a delusion. Modern science despises the credulity to which it owes so much. It honors now the men who in the past shared its present feelings. Yet without this credulity it is hardly possible that chemistry could have made so speedily the advance it did. It perhaps might have scarcely made any advance at all. The faith that the baser metals could be transmuted into gold brought to the efforts made to accomplish the result not merely the love of diving into the secrets of nature which appeals to some, but the love of money which influences all. In this way the

[1] Line 544.

[2] Lines 401–404.

most powerful and the most universal of human passions was actively enlisted in the service of science. Alchemy had in the fourteenth century, as in later times, its devotees among men of learning and position. Chaucer's contemporary, Gower, was apparently a believer in it, though he did not believe in its professors. They lost more than they made, he tells us. They fell into debt and poverty. They spent five pounds to gain one. But he is careful to inform us that, for all that, the science itself is true.[1] Langland, another contemporary, attacks alchemy, indeed, on the ground that it deceives the people. But his censure of it is part of his general poor opinion of all science. There is nothing in what he says to indicate that he has any conception of the essentially fraudulent character of this particular one. His opposition to it is a religious opposition, not an intellectual one. Astronomy is likewise in his opinion an evil thing to know, and geometry is coupled with geomancy as full of guile.[2]

Far different is the position taken by Chaucer. No reader of the Canon's Yeoman's tale needs to be told of the light in which he looked upon alchemy. Never has there been a completer exposure than his of its fraudulent practices, never a more scornful portrayal of the so-called science as being itself nothing but a fraud. There is, indeed, hardly any limit to the contempt the poet pours upon its pretensions. It is interesting, however, to note that he has never been able to persuade the believers in it of the sincerity of his own disbelief. The antiquary, Thynne, speaks of it as "that abstruse science

[1] Vol. ii., p. 88 (Pauli).

[2] *Vision of Piers Plowman*, B text, Passus x., 207–213.

which Chaucer knew full well, though he inveighs against the sophistical abuses thereof."[1] Ashmole, likewise, in his collection of ancient poetical pieces upon this subject, reprints the prologue and the tale of the Canon's Yeoman entire. In his annotations, he gives as the reason for so doing that Chaucer was a master in alchemy, and that his sole intent in writing these particular pieces was to expose the villainous pretenders who made use of this true though injured science to practise fraud upon their fellow-men.[2]

These illustrations are sufficient to show that in his way of looking at the questions prominent in his time Chaucer was rather a man of to-day than of the Middle Ages. The wide, even if not unquestioning, assent given to current opinions never affected the independence of his own judgment. He went even further than simple disbelief. He seems at times almost sensitive to any possible imputation of credulity of which he might be suspected. When he recites marvellous stories he is occasionally careful to put upon record that it is not he who is responsible for them. He is merely relating them upon the authority of others. For instance, he repeats Virgil's narrative of Æneas having been made invisible by Venus; but he is particular to add,

"I can not say if that it be possíble."

All that he ventures to assert about it is that it is found in the authority he follows. As he expresses it,

"Thus saith the book, withouten any les;"[3]

[1] *Animadversions, etc.*, p. 36.
[2] Ashmole, *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (Lond., 1652), p. 470 ff.
[3] *Legend of Good Women*, lines 1021 and 1023.

that is, without any lie on my part. He is apparently haunted by the fear that the men who read his work, or hear it read, may regard his account of the invisibility of Æneas not as a poetic fiction, but as the record of an event that actually took place. Or if they look upon it as false, they will be disposed to hold him responsible for the belief in the falsehood, if not for the falsehood itself, and despise him for the credulity which accepted a fable so transparent as a real occurrence. These are the feelings of a man in advance of his age who wishes neither to alienate the few nor to mislead the many. In the one case, he cannot reconcile it to his self-respect to be deemed the dupe of an idle tale. In the other, he cannot reconcile it to his conscience to give unqualified expression to even poetic fiction if he think it liable to be accepted by any as historic fact.

Here, then, is a critical turn of mind manifested in regard to many beliefs which were then widely held by the learned as well as the unlearned. We find ourselves in contact with a man who, living in a credulous and superstitious age, is neither credulous nor superstitious. He brings to the questions that then presented themselves for consideration the same unimpassioned gaze, the same calm, clear discernment, the same judicial method which modern science asserts or boasts that it brings to the examination of the various phenomena of nature with which it is called upon to deal. How would a person of such a character be affected by the unsettling of beliefs which the theological controversies of the time had brought to pass? He is sceptical about numerous accepted matters outside of religion. Does he display, or

did he come to display, the same feeling about religion itself? Recognizing as I do the unsubstantial nature of the testimony upon which we have to rely, it still seems to me that the only answer that can be made must be made in the affirmative. The evidence, so far as it exists, indicates that Chaucer's mind passed through several phases, but that towards the end doubt and denial became its leading characteristics. This is a view which, besides being novel, will be repugnant to many. Before presenting it in detail, therefore, it is fair to say that the evidence in its favor is scanty. But it is equally fair to say that it cannot be expected to be otherwise than scanty. What we know, or think we know, about Chaucer's opinions must be gathered from his own writings. Yet from much aid in that quarter we are cut off by the very nature of things. Disbelief, even if it existed in him in a marked degree, we should not expect to find manifested in an offensive form. That would not have been Chaucer's manner under any circumstances or in any age. But had his disposition even been different from what it was, there is little reason to suppose that his writings would have furnished much direct or any decisive testimony upon this point. Unbelief in most periods is rarely inclined to be aggressive; for there can never be much of the missionary spirit in the spirit that denies. It consequently has little disposition to undergo the toil and trouble of persistent and prolonged attack. It forms no sects, it organizes no propaganda. It often contents itself with holding its views in silence. It sometimes shrinks conscientiously from disturbing the faith that it cannot share. This indisposition to make loud

proclamation of its hostility to accepted beliefs is a general characteristic which it displays in every age, however conspicuously particular individuals may take an opposite course. But this natural reluctance would be intensified in a period like the fourteenth century, when heresy-hunting, an occupation ever highly congenial to a certain class of feline natures, could resort to weapons more tangible than railing personal accusations or inarticulate braying through the press.

Let us begin with things that are not in themselves inconsistent with belief. Mention has already been made of one characteristic that is apt to manifest itself when a long period of religious activity and intense spiritual fervor is passing over into that period in which worldliness and indifference and doubt accompany the abandonment of beliefs once rigidly held and unquestioningly accepted. This is the audacity that shows itself in the treatment of sacred subjects. The irreverence displayed extends even to the personality of the Creator himself. In all periods of earnest religious conviction, in which the supreme thought of man's life is how best to save his soul, there comes to be a nearness to the Divinity that partakes to some extent of almost the nature of personal intimacy. Men feel that they live in immediate communion with the Almighty. They learn to look upon him both with affection as a loving father and with dread as a supreme and righteous judge. The reactionary movement that follows changes in a peculiar way the attitude of man to his Maker. The sense of nearness remains, but the sense of reverence is gone. A familiarity, which has about it scarcely the

slightest trace of awe, has taken the place of the love that was felt or the fear that was inspired. God is looked upon by men as one of the same nature with themselves. He differs only by being higher in station and mightier in power. There develops itself, in consequence, a freedom, to call it by no worse name, in dealing with sacred subjects which often gives a shock to the feelings of men who, without perhaps any depth of religious conviction, have been accustomed to pay a conventional respect to usages and beliefs that have no real influence over their lives.

This daring and even reckless manner of speech in addressing the Deity or speaking of him has been imputed to the descendants of the Puritans as a part of the reaction against the sterner creed and stricter practice of the past. But it is a feeling that is liable to manifest itself at any period when the bonds of faith are loosening their hold. The miracle plays of the Middle Ages are marked in places by a most irreverent spirit, though these passages generally occur in the treatment of the incidents of the Bible story, and not in the references to God himself. This same irreverence is certainly exhibited by Chaucer, whatever be the source from which it sprang. There is sometimes an audaciousness in his reference to the Supreme Being which can hardly fail to strike a discordant note upon the feelings of a man of strongly devout temperament. The familiarity of tone employed will occasionally impress a more decorous time as coming perilously near to the verge of blasphemy. To Chaucer the Creator seems often little more than an earthly lord. He serves as readily as such a monarch to

illustrate a description or point a comparison. In the 'Parliament of Fowls' the beauty of the music which the poet hears in the garden into which he is introduced is made emphatic after the following peculiar fashion in these lines:

"Of instruments of stringès in accord
Heard I so play a ravishing sweetnéss,
That God, that maker is of all and lord,
Ne heardè never better, as I guess." 197–200.

In the 'Death of Blanche' the despondent husband is represented as bewailing his loss, and inveighing against the cruelty of Fortune. She has robbed him of the mistress of his life, who, in the fanciful figurative language taken from the game of chess, is called the 'fers,' the representative of the modern queen. Yet on reflection he sees that he cannot blame Fortune for her conduct. She desired for herself the very best. In that she did only what every one else would have done. Nor is the mourning lover satisfied with paying this tribute to the woman whose death he deplores. Had he been God himself, he tells us in the following lines, he would have acted precisely as Fortune did:

"And eke she is the less to blame;
Myself I would have done the same
Before God, had I been as she;
She ought the more excusèd be.
For this I say yet more thereto,
Had I been God and might have do
My willè, when she my fers caught,
I would have drawn the samè draught." 675–682.

This will seem to most sufficiently audacious. Yet

even it is surpassed by the irreverent way in which he introduces the Deity in his description of Dido, in the 'Legend of Good Women':

"This freshè lady, of the city queen,
Stood in the temple in her estate royál,
So richèly, and eke so fair withal,
So young, so lusty, with her eyen glade,
That if that God, that heaven and earthè made,
Would have a love for beauty and goodnéss,
And womanhood, and truth, and seemlinéss,
Whom should he loven but this lady sweet?
There n' is no woman to him half so meet." 1035–1043.

All this, however, is no convincing evidence of disbelief. The reckless treatment of the divine may not even denote lack of reverence, though it can never fail to seem irreverent. The most that can be said of it is that it does not indicate a spiritual frame of mind. But no one familiar with the poet's writings in their entirety could attribute to him such a characteristic. There are those to whom faith is not so much a result of education or of conviction as it is a necessity of their being. It is natures of this kind that keep alive the religious flame in every age of doubt or unbelief. It is they who furnish martyrs constantly, and sometimes persecutors; for there has always been, and always will be, a body of enthusiasts who, if they cannot convert others, will feel perfectly justified in exterminating them. It is hardly necessary to say that to this class Chaucer does not belong. He could not even have with those constituting it any further sympathy than the purely intellectual one which enables a man of genius to project himself

into states of feeling which he is far from sharing. We find plenty of illustrations of this general view of his character. The critical spirit, for example, is applied by him to the facts of the Bible as coolly as by the most cold-blooded of rationalists or the most scoffing of infidels. In the Merchant's tale there is a delightful mixture of the conceptions of the ancient pagan religions and of modern popular superstitions. Pluto and Proserpine appear as the king and queen of fairy-land. An animated discussion takes place between them as to the fidelity of women. Pluto quotes in their condemnation the words of Solomon and of Jesus, son of Sirach. Proserpine, in defending her sex, is led to speak in the most contemptuous terms of the infidelity of the monarch of Israel.[1] In the course of her denunciation she declares,

> "Pardie, as fair as ye his name emplaster,[2]
> He was a lecher and an idolaster."[3]

The charge rests upon the authority of Scripture itself. Still, it is not often so bluntly stated. It certainly would never have been so bluntly stated by a spiritually minded man.

There are, however, evidences of a more decisive character than these, though it would be venturesome to call them decisive in themselves. Still, if I read Chaucer's words correctly, there is a gradual change to be observed in his religious views, or at least in his views about religion. A marked difference exists between the attitude exhibited towards it in his later work and that which is found in the earlier. The critical mood,

[1] Lines 1053, 1054. [2] To plaster or smooth over. [3] Idolater.

the tendency to denial, is in both. But in the latter it has neither the prominence, the directness, nor the suggestiveness which it displays in the former. 'Troilus and Cressida' was written before the 'Legend of Good Women' or the 'Canterbury Tales.' If Lydgate is to be trusted, it was a production of the poet's youth. In it the doubts which perpetually assail the heart make their appearance. But the emphasis that is laid upon them is slight. This does not spring from the fact that the author does not assert them in his own person. That, for obvious reasons, was rarely Chaucer's habit. It is because they are invariably uttered under the stress of peculiar circumstances, with an object plainly manifest of sufficient importance to warrant their introduction from the literary point of view. Cressida, anxious to relieve the fears of her lover about the conduct of her father acting under the influence of prophetic warnings, refers contemptuously to the divine oracles, and declares that

> "Goddès speak in amphibologies,
> And for one sooth they tellen twenty lies."[1]

Her further and more daring statement, that it was fear that first invented gods, is not found in the poet's immediate original. It is taken, however, from the remote one. It represents, substantially, the defiant speech of Capaneus in the 'Thebaid.'[2] But utterances such as these of Cressida are the natural expression of excitement and passion rather than of real conviction. So far as this poem is concerned, it is in Pandarus that we

[1] Book iv., 1406.

[2] Lib. iii., 601.

see the sceptical character exemplified. He attacks all the various kinds of belief prevalent, or supposed to be prevalent, in his time. Attention to dreams is spoken of as nothing but a proof of the folly of man. Popular superstitions, such as that which regards the owl as a messenger of death, meet with his unqualified contempt. The priestly divinations also, which sought to foretell the future from the flight of birds and similar auguries, fare no better at his hands. For all of these he has the scornful comment,

> "Alas! alas! so noble a creature
> As is a man shall dreaden such ordure." v., 384.

Remarks like these, doubtless, exhibit the poet's superiority to vulgar beliefs then largely existing, which in some instances have not entirely died out now even among those who call themselves educated. Still, as regards his own personal faith, they cannot be held to prove anything more than that his mind was dallying with views that it was yet a long way from accepting. There is nothing of actual denial implied, unless it be thought to consist in that streak of doubt which at times intermingles itself with the feelings of the most earnest believer in a creed. The poem itself carries, in fact, its own refutation of the scepticism which it records. The course of events shows that the denial of the divine interposition in human affairs is an error. The supernatural things which it is said cannot happen are the very things that do happen. Moreover, in this earlier work the direct assertion of belief is stated strongly, though there is no apparent reason for stating it at all. At the

conclusion there is an unnecessary and most contemptuous attack upon the "cursed old rites" of the pagans, and upon the worthlessness of the heathen gods, Jove, Apollo, Mars, and all "such rascaille." One is led to surmise that the poet had felt that it was almost inconsistent with his character as a Christian to treat them as respectfully as the plot of his story required. The denunciation of these is accompanied with an exhortation to the young to put their trust wholly in the true God. As if this were not enough, the envoy to the work contains a glowing apostrophe to the Trinity. The whole ending leaves upon the mind the impression that Chaucer was determined to announce in unmistakable language his acceptance of the established faith, and to put beyond shadow of dispute the orthodoxy of his doctrinal opinions.

This is the poet's earlier attitude. When we come to his later work, there is a far different tone manifested. It is sometimes manifested in a way which it would seem must have been venturesome. The scepticism is not always put in the mouths of his characters. It is he himself who suggests the doubt or expresses the denial. The instances are few, but they are significant. Two of them, in particular, demand an attention which they have never received. The first is the following passage with which the 'Legend of Good Women' opens:

> "A thousand timès have I heard men tell
> That there is joy in heaven and pain in hell;
> And I accordè well that it is so;
> But nathèless yet wot I well also

That there n' is none dwelling in this countrý
That either hath in heaven or hell ybe,[1]
Ne may of it none other wayes witen,[2]
But as he hath heard said or found it written,
For by assay there may no man it preve."[3]

The poet, indeed, goes on to declare that God forbid that men should believe only those things which they themselves see or do. They must give faith to what they read in books. This modification of the original statement, made at that time almost as a matter of necessity, can hardly be deemed of any more weight than the previous concession, that the speaker is willing to agree to the views he has heard constantly expressed, that there is joy in heaven and pain in hell, though he at once proceeds to point out that there is no real evidence for the existence of either. The lines are, indeed, more remarkable for the impression they convey than for what they directly assert. Chaucer in them indicates clearly his opinion that none have any real acquaintance with the nature of the future life of which they speak so confidently. He himself does not presume to deny what is said of it. It is equally noticeable that he does not affirm his belief in it. But his words suggest that the only confidence he feels is, that he knows as much about it as any one, and that no one knows anything about it at all.

Far more important than this, however, is the passage in the Knight's tale, in which the death of Arcite is described. From it not the slightest intimation can be wrung that the poet had any faith in the received

[1] Been. [2] Know. [3] Make trial of.

doctrine about the future life. More than that, he gives utterance to a hardly veiled contempt for those who presume to discourse upon it. He explicitly asserts that he does not even care to record their opinions. The passage is striking because it is not found in the original from which the poem is taken. The sentiments expressed in it were added by Chaucer himself. They may fairly be assumed, in consequence, to represent his real opinions. Boccaccio's account of the fate that befell Arcite after death had been previously used by him. Its incidents had been transferred to Troilus. This would prevent him from employing the same description a second time. But it did not involve the necessity of a contemptuous reference to a recital of which on one occasion he had not disdained to avail himself. It did not involve the necessity of his adding a purely gratuitous declaration that it was impossible for him or for any one else to know the unknowable; that is, to tell what had become of the hero's soul. Is there any reason to question that the poet's belief, or rather his lack of belief, is represented in the following lines?

"His spirit changèd house and wentè there,
As I came never, I can not tell where:
Therefore I stint,[1] I n'am no divinister,[2]
Of soulès find I not in this regíster;[3]
Ne me ne list thilk opinìóns to tell
Of hem, though that they writen where they dwell."

1951–1956.

Can modern agnosticism point to a denial more emphatic than that made in the fourteenth century of the

[1] Stop. [2] Diviner, soothsayer. [3] Book, record.

belief that there exists for us any assurance of the life that is lived beyond the grave?

Assertions of a character so pronounced as this could not be expected to be common at that period. The wonder is not that they are found so infrequently, but that they are found at all. Their outspokenness, indeed, differs materially from the usual circumspection which marks Chaucer's utterances. For if views either derogatory or contemptuous appear in his writings as coming from himself, it is a characteristic of his method that they are rarely stated directly. If this does occur, he almost invariably hastens to put in a qualification. Even then his words are sometimes susceptible of a double meaning, not because he had any fondness for double meanings, but doubtless because ambiguity furnished in many cases a secure fortress into which he could retire when hard pressed. We see this habit of mind frequently exemplified in his references to women. Monasticism had set the literary fashion of making them the object of constant attack. There were reasons apparently why Chaucer felt it incumbent upon him not to be too conspicuous in this warfare. The temptation naturally assailed him often, however, to follow the general custom of the time. It is accordingly in no wise strange that he occasionally yielded to it. Still, his sentences are so peculiarly turned that it is frequently impossible to tell whether they are intended to convey a compliment or a reproach. The Franklin's tale, for illustration, is full of references to the love and devotion of wives. These are accompanied, however, by a running comment which can easily be made to give the op-

posite sense. Yet so delicately is the work of insinuation done that the meaning on the surface will be the only meaning that attracts the attention of most.[1] This peculiarity of Chaucer's method turns up in the most unexpected places. It leaves the reader uncertain whether the poet is wholly in earnest or simply laughing in his sleeve. There is a signal illustration of it in the description of the misery of the heroine which follows the pathetic death-bed scene in the Knight's tale. What helpeth it, the speaker is represented as saying,

> "To tarryen forth the day,
> To tellen how she weep[2] both eve and morrow?
> For in such casè women have such sorrow,
> When that here[3] husbands be from hem[4] ago,[5]
> That for the morè part they sorrowen so,
> Or ellès[6] fallen in such malady,
> That at the lastè certainly they die." 1962–1968.

Guileless as these words seem, their innocence of intention is made suspicious by the equivocal character of the last line. Death is the final result we should expect in any case, whether women mourned or rejoiced.

This same ambiguity of expression occasionally marks Chaucer's comments upon the church. Here it was doubtless essential to his comfort, if not to his safety, that his words could be taken in two senses. Perhaps in all of his writings there is nothing of this equivocal nature more suggestive than the acts and sayings attributed to the Summoner in the general Prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales.' This officer of the spiritual

[1] For illustration, see lines 13–15; 75–78; 89, 90.
[2] Wept.
[3] Their.
[4] Them.
[5] Gone.
[6] Else.

court, who, like most of his sort, was clearly a confirmed rascal, is described as being at heart of a kindly disposition. He is disposed to be of any service to any good fellow who happens to have fallen into the clutches of the ecclesiastical authorities for offences against morality of which they took cognizance. He instructs him how any retribution for his misdeeds can easily be avoided. The process is a very simple one. Unless he is of an avaricious nature, unless his soul is in his purse, he need feel no apprehension of the sufferings to which he will be subjected by the spiritual court. All that he has to do is to pay money. If he does that, a way will be found to remit penalties of any other kind, or the penalty itself will be attended with no inconvenience. "Purse is the archdeacon's hell," is the sententious form in which the Summoner points out the character of the punishment which the delinquent is likely to undergo. This is a most audacious as well as most immoral remark to be put into the mouth of an official of the very court which was specially charged with the preservation of the purity of morals. Chaucer had unquestionably no desire to be brought himself before any such tribunal. He therefore felt the need of qualifying the statement upon the spot. He hastened to disavow a sentiment so scandalous. He did disavow it. Still, he did it in such a way as to leave the reader, who looks below the surface, in a good deal of doubt as to his real feelings. No sooner has he recounted the sayings of the Summoner than he adds:

"But well I wot he lièd right indeed,
Of cursing ought each guilty man him dread,
For curse will slay right as assoiling saveth." 659-661.

The peculiar wording of this last line can hardly have been the result of anything but design. It is evident that it is capable of a double interpretation. Certainly not much confidence is conveyed by it either in the slaying power of the curse or the saving power of the absolution. The very comparison which is apparently introduced to strengthen his denial of the Summoner's assertion has rather the tendency to re-enforce the assertion itself. It may not have been the idea the poet intended to convey, but it is certainly a legitimate inference from his language that he did not believe that either excommunication or absolution had the slightest weight in determining the future of the soul.

Still, half-hinted attacks like the one just quoted, of which few would guess the full purport, are not much more to be expected than bold avowals of disbelief which would have shocked all. It is not in specific statements that we are to recognize the real Chaucer, but in the impression made upon us by the general tone of what he wrote. Here, it seems to me, can be traced most confidently the change that came over his spirit. At the outset he is possibly an unthinking, but to all appearances an unquestioning, believer in the faith in which he has been reared. He feels the beauty of the life of sacrifice and devotion which inspires the purer and loftier natures that enter into the service of the church. The intellectual perception thus acquired continues during the whole of his career. It enables him to put himself in full sympathy with the believers in views which he may have learned to doubt or deny. In this way we can look for the reconciliation of utterances on

his part apparently contradictory. For in portions of his work Chaucer is the orthodox representative of the established church. He recounts with gravity stupendous miracles that owe their origin to superstition or fraud, and are accepted without question by the credulity which masquerades under the guise of faith, and regards it as a crowning merit to believe that to be true which it knows to be false. He even lends himself, as we have seen, to the prejudices of the ignorant and fanatical. But though all this is included in his latest work, it is no longer the side which is, or is made, prominent. The prevailing cast of thought is of a totally different kind. It is easier to feel it than to analyze it, and easier to analyze it than to prove it. But the general view of all his productions leaves upon the mind the impression that his personal religious history was marked by the dwindling devoutness which makes up the experience of so many lives—the fallings from us, the vanishings, we know not how or when, of beliefs in which we have been bred. One characteristic which not unusually accompanies the decline of faith in the individual is in him very conspicuous. This is the prominence given to the falsity and fraud of those who have professedly devoted themselves to the advancement of the cause of Christianity. The moral degradation of the men who have entered the service of the church for the purpose of serving their own interests are the things which largely attract his attention. The poet who had chosen to celebrate the Virgin in strains which the devoutest of Roman Catholics has never surpassed; who, at the end of his 'Troilus and Cressida,' felt it incumbent to revile the

very pagan machinery which he had employed, found later his keenest delight in the exposure of that dry rot in religion when men no longer practise what they preach, or even understand what they profess to believe.

Noticeable it certainly is that much of Chaucer's late work, so far as we know it to be late, is distinctly hostile to the church, whatever be the cause to which we are disposed to attribute the fact. It is, moreover, hostile to it in a way that implies an utter disbelief in certain of its tenets, and even a disposition to regard them as full of menace to the future of civilization. This is a side of his intellectual character that has attracted no attention. Yet it is far more significant as an exposition of his real feelings than the conventional attacks on the clerical orders, upon which great stress has often been laid. These, as it has been pointed out, are rather peculiar to the time than to the poet himself. There is, of course, a sufficiency of them. The contrast between precept and practice in the lives of men nominally devoted to the advancement of religion is perpetually brought to the attention. The attack, to be sure, is almost invariably made in the way of suggestion or of ironical insinuation rather than after a direct and aggressive fashion. In the Reeve's tale, we are told that the miller's wife is the daughter of the parish priest. He intends to make her his heiress because the goods of holy church should be spent upon those who are descended from holy church. In the Summoner's tale, the begging friar insists that no trouble shall be taken about his meal. He professes that he will be contented with homely fare, and is particular to request that nothing more be prepared for him

than the liver of a capon, a piece of soft bread, and the head of a roasted pig. Then he proceeds to deliver a discourse upon gluttony, in which he informs his hearers that by fasting and purity of life the men of his order have made their prayers especially acceptable to God.

Satirical remarks of this nature do not indicate any special love for the church. But neither do they indicate towards it any special aversion. The wordy warfare constantly going on between the members of the rival ecclesiastical organizations had made imputations of this sort familiar. It would naturally be altogether different when attacks were made upon practices and doctrines which could enlist for their support the united forces of all orders in the clerical community. It is these, therefore, that are important. If they are found at all, they cannot fail to be regarded as specially significant. And in Chaucer's writings they are found. In his treatment of certain accepted beliefs he exhibits conspicuously the critical attitude which he holds towards the established religion of the time. He also manifests his consummate skill in giving utterance to his views without exposing himself to the risk of personal danger or even annoyance. The course he adopts to secure this result is adequate both for the full expression of his own opinions and for the avoidance of trouble that might arise from their promulgation. It is to the inferior, and sometimes disreputable, personages of the story that the revolutionary sentiments that occur in his writings are almost invariably attributed. For that reason they escaped censure then, as they have escaped observation since. The persons to whom these sentiments are given have a

license to speak rudely, and even recklessly. From them nothing refined or religiously edifying is to be expected. What they say could hardly have been said safely by Chaucer speaking for himself. The words in that case would surely have given offence. They might have subjected him to unpleasant attention from the ecclesiastical authorities. But they are in perfect conformity with the speech of the rude and coarse natures to whom they are assigned. It was a triumph of literary art to put forward heterodox views prominently, and not subject himself to condemnation for their avowal. It is not even impossible that his course procured him commendation. A thorough devotee of the church might feel a certain satisfaction in pointing out that it was from the lips of the uneducated and vulgar that attacks came upon doctrines that were accepted without question by the cultivated.

There are several instances of this method of advancing dangerous opinions that can be found in the poet's writings. But in no part of his works does the extent to which he had emancipated himself from the prevalent influences and beliefs of his age exhibit itself after so peculiar a fashion as in the prologue to the Wife of Bath's tale. This piece is, in many ways, the most remarkable production that ever came from his pen. From the very outset its greatness was recognized. His own references to it in the Clerk's tale, in the Merchant's tale, and in the epistle to Bukton pretty clearly intimate that it was a production with which he himself was pleased. He had good reason for thinking well of it. No other single piece gives so full an idea of the range of his pow-

ers. In no other are certain characteristics of his genius more brilliantly displayed. Its combination of irony and sarcasm, of shrewd observation, and of occasional pathos gives it a title to be reckoned among the two or three productions that denote the high-water mark of Chaucer's genius. This is admitted by those who have made a study of the poet's works. It is reluctantly conceded by some, who feel it necessary to pay a proper tribute to conventional decorum by expressing disapprobation of the tone that pervades much of it. Yet most, if not all, of the current criticism of the piece is based upon an utter misapprehension of the motive of the writer. Certain things reveal themselves at a glance. It is a trite enough remark that this particular prologue announces the doctrine of the tale that follows, that what most women care for is the possession of power. It is full as apparent that it enabled the poet to embody all the commonplace attacks which have been made from time immemorial upon the female sex, nowhere more constantly and more vigorously than in the writings of religious ascetics. If this were all, or even the main thing, it contained, it would be little more than what it has been commonly reported to be—a jesting attack upon the frailties of women, made more pointed because the one who delivers it exemplifies conspicuously the very qualities which with mock indignation she resents as unjust and untrue.

This, however, is an utterly inadequate conception of the nature and intent of this piece. The prologue to the Wife of Bath's tale is, in reality, for the age in which it was written, a revolutionary document. It embodies the

protest of human nature against the doctrine that made the single life purer and nobler than the wedded. The audacity of the performance will not be fully recognized unless we bear in mind that the doctrine attacked was the doctrine universally accepted. It could quote in its favor both the teaching and the practice of the church. It appealed for its exaltation of virginity to the words of the great apostle to the Gentiles. It had on its side the authority of several of the most revered of the early fathers. These had laid down with positiveness the doctrine of the superior sanctity of celibacy. The wedded person who lived the Christian life, who fought the fight and kept the faith, would, indeed, receive the promised crown; but it would be only a second-rate crown in comparison with that of the one who had for religious reasons avoided matrimony. Tertullian, for instance, characterizes married women as those of the second degree of modesty who had fallen into wedlock.[1] But the most famous advocate of this view was St. Jerome. His invective against the monk Jovinian was perhaps the most celebrated, or at least the most popular, tractate that had been produced upon the side of celibacy. The maintainer of the equal purity and honorableness of marriage with virginity, against whom Jerome's treatise was directed, seems to have become, in consequence, a general representative of self-indulgence and license of every description. It can hardly be any fabulous emperor of Rome to whom the friar is represented in the Summoner's tale as having compared the monks in the following lines:

[1] *De Virginibus Velandis*, cap. xvii.

"Methinketh they be like Jovinian,
Fat as a whale and walking as a swan,
All vinolent as bottle in the spence." 221–223.

It is this Protestant of the fourth century, born out of his time, that the speaker had here in view. Certainly it is precisely the character which the ferocious saint imputes to his opponent, and the very words used in this place do not differ materially from his own.[1]

As if the attack itself upon celibacy were not daring enough, Chaucer made it even more pointed by using this most famous treatise written in its support as the basis of his own production. The saint, indeed, would have been astounded could he have foreseen the malicious wit which was to be employed in turning his arguments, or rather assertions, into ridicule. There can be no question as to the poet's position in this matter. His contempt for the doctrine, and the reasons advanced in its favor, is scarcely even disguised. The confounding of celibacy with chastity excites his scorn. It is hardly necessary to observe that at such a period the expression of sentiments of this kind is not made the ostensible, or even a prominent, motive for producing the work. Nor would these sentiments be put forth by Chaucer in his own person, or in that of any serious character. It was not accident that led to the selection of the speaker. It was no fondness for coarseness for coarseness' sake that dictated the tone which is frequently found in this poem. It is in the mouth of one like the sensual, shrewd, and worldly wife of Bath, who

[1] "Iste formosus monachus, crassus, nitidus, dealbatus, et quasi sponsus semper incedens."—*Hieronymus adversus Jovinianum*, i., 40.

boasts that she has already had five husbands, and is ready to welcome the sixth whenever he presents himself, that an attack upon celibacy could be safely placed. It is only a personage, such as she is represented to be, that could have been permitted to travesty without rebuke the treatise of the saint. Only in a character like hers would have been tolerated the curt and disdainful denial—

"The experience wot well it is not so[1]"—

which is all she condescends to make upon one of his statements. No one is imposed upon by her contemptuous concession that marriage is inferior to virginity, or her perfect willingness to admit the superiority of a state which she has not the slightest desire to share.

The character of the Wife of Bath, the person who is made directly responsible for the attack upon celibacy, is itself a great creation. The original suggestion of it is easily recognized in the old woman in the *Roman de la Rose* who is set to keep watch over Bel-Acueil. By that same work individual traits are suggested, and occasionally details of importance are taken from it. But in passing through Chaucer's hands the character has been broadened and deepened, so as to make it in turn an original, and an original of the very highest type. It was essential to the poet's design that the Wife of Bath should be a woman of coarse fibre. Only through such a personage could he safely raise the standard of revolt against the doctrine that represented the one who shirked the duties of life as being of a higher and holier type than the one who discharged them. The occasional coarse-

[1] Line 124.

ness of this piece seems to have hid from many even its greatness as a work of art. It ought, moreover, to be added that some of the passages in it most offensive to modern taste are nearly literal translations from the treatise of the Christian father upon which it is founded. But the criticism is painfully short-sighted that sees in this remarkable production merely the repellent speech of a woman possessed, it is true, of great natural shrewdness, but wholly under the sway of strong sensual passions. Much more than this distinguishes the poem. There is in it reckless gayety; there is humor of the highest kind; there is profound knowledge of human nature; and, what evinces higher power still, there is an undertone of melancholy which suggests far more than it says, and is, indeed, capable of crowding the burden of life's perpetually recurring tragedy into the short and simple comment,

"Alas! alas! that ever love was sin!" 614.

The view that has been given of the motive, or at least of one great motive, that inspired the composition of this prologue cannot fairly be deemed overstrained. Nor is it unsupported by what is found in other parts of the poet's writings. The same feeling about celibacy and the results of it is exhibited in various passages. Very marked, indeed, in its connection with the subject is the coarse raillery with which the Host salutes the Monk before requiring him to tell a story. Here, again, the choice of the personage to express the sentiment is noteworthy. He is a rough man, and he speaks roughly. But though the words are the words of a boor, the ideas

are those of Chaucer. His sentiments are, in fact, more precisely indicated in this place than in the humorous commentary upon St. Jerome by the Wife of Bath. In the lines which introduce the tale of the Monk we detect the feeling that must have been constantly present to the mind of a keen observer, such as was the poet, about the social movements going on before his eyes. What seems to us a very modern doctrine had, at this early day, been brought to his attention by the practical workings of the system of celibacy which the church had established. True, the talk is here only of the transmission of physical characteristics. Any other kind would have been out of harmony with the character of the speaker who, in his rough horse-play, is rallying the Monk. But we need not doubt that the idea put forth included much that was not expressed. It was not of bodily qualities alone that Chaucer was thinking when he represented the host as praying that God might give confusion to the one who first brought men of the magnificent physical presence of the Monk to devote themselves to the religious life—that is, to a life which required them to abandon all thought of marriage. The world is lost, he cries. The best and mightiest of the race have taken upon themselves vows of celibacy. We laymen, he goes on to say, are nothing but mere shrimps. After this the deduction that follows is unavoidable, and has necessarily a far wider application than to physical traits. It needed not the lessons of modern science to teach the acute student of the fourteenth century that

"Of feeble trees there comen wretched imps."[1]

[1] Scions.

This one passage is of itself sufficient proof how modern Chaucer was in his way of looking at social questions. It exhibits plainly one side of his point of view. There are other passages that indicate a view of the same subject from another direction. No one, after a careful comparison of all of them, can well escape from the conclusion that against the doctrine of celibacy there was ever present to the poet's mind one most grave objection. This was the double danger with which its practice threatened civilization. If the priest was unfaithful to his vows, if he yielded to the temptations that lie in wait for all, he was not simply bringing a scandal upon his order, he was unsettling the foundations of morality. He was placing an obstacle in the way of the upward progress of humanity. If he remained faithful to his vows—and in this class would necessarily be included the best and purest—the right to propagate the race would be cut off from the men most likely to transmit to their descendants the highest intellectual and moral qualities. It was the ultimate effect of celibacy, not upon the church, but upon civilization, that was in the poet's thought. It is for that reason he tells us that the world is lost. It is almost impossible to doubt, after reading his words, that he, in the fourteenth century, had leaped to the same conclusion which modern science has at last painfully demonstrated, though it was not permissible for him to express it save after a blunt and even coarse fashion.

I am not contending that Chaucer comprehended the full purport of the modern doctrine of heredity, or the results of any of those processes which we classify under

the sounding name of evolution. It is not likely that any opinions on the subject that occurred to him were regularly formulated in his own mind, or that he generalized his observations of the particular phenomena he saw taking place about him. Yet, again, he may have caught a distant but distinct view of the theory which later generations were to prove. It is not unlikely that, so far as regards himself, he was its discoverer. If so, it will not be the first time that the genius of the poet has divined a truth which the researches of the investigator were subsequently to verify. For the inspired imagination acts like the eye of the traveller in unexplored lands who has ascended some mountain-peak and catches from its summit the glimpse of a great city in the distance, entirely hidden from the dwellers in the plain. Its magnificence, its comparative importance, its distinguishing features cannot be discerned. Nor is the precise direction clear by which it is to be reached, nor the way to it easy. Before its gates can be entered valleys must be traversed, forests must be threaded, hills must be climbed, rivers must be crossed. The place itself, during the whole of the intervening journey, may be lost to sight. But though the traveller may not know the path that leads to it, he knows that he has seen it, he knows that it is there. If not to him, it will be granted to some one else to tread its streets who approaches it from perhaps a more distant, but from a more accessible, quarter. Just so the imagination of the poet sometimes lifts him up to the view of great truths which it will be the business of after-times to reach by circuitous processes, and reveal to the eyes of all.

One further point remains to be considered. Whatever may have been Chaucer's personal concern in matters of religion, there can be no doubt as to the closeness of attention he paid to those mysterious things of faith about which controversy has raged almost from the outset. It does not militate against the view that holds him as supremely the man of letters to recognize the fact that he was profoundly interested in the questions connected with doctrinal theology that have perplexed the ages. The problems which still disquiet the intellect, and after the solution of which we grope in vain in the soul's own darkness, were the ones that were perpetually present to his mind. He returns to them again and again. He touches upon them sometimes humorously, but usually with an earnestness that shows how fully he recognized the importance of their bearing upon the condition and destiny of man. The presence of evil in a universe ruled by an almighty as well as an all-loving God; the difficulty of reconciling divine justice with the injustice and consequent misery endured by innocent men: these are matters in which his pages reflect constantly one aspect of a world in which sorrow and suffering make up so large a share of human life. In the Franklin's tale, Dorigen, wandering along the storm-beaten coast, complains of the existence of the rocks that endanger her husband's safety upon his return. We are told, she says, that God makes nothing in vain. Why, then, has he made these, against which vessels are constantly dashed to pieces, and thousands hurried, as a result, to undeserved death? In the Knight's tale, the unhappy prisoner passes at once from the contemplation

of the misery he suffers on account of love to the dark and dubious question connected with the moral government of the world. How can divine prescience, without guilt on its own part, suffer innocence to endure wrong, and yet itself exact rigidly the penalty of violated law? In the following passage of singular pathos and power—a passage of which no trace is found in his original—the poet gives expression to feelings that must have lain heavy upon his heart:

"O cruel goddès that govérn
This world with binding of your word eterne,
And written in the table of adamant
Your parliament and your eternè grant,
What is mankinde more unto you hold[1]
Than is the sheep that rucketh[2] in the fold?
For slain is man, right as another beast,
And dwelleth eke in prison and arrest,
And hath sickness and great adversity,
And oftè timès guiltèless, pardie.
What governance is in this presciénce
That guiltèless tormenteth innocénce?
And yet encreaseth this all my penánce,
That man is bounden to his observánce
For Godès sake to letten of[3] his will,
There as a beast may all his lust fulfill;
And when a beast is dead he hath no pain,
But man after his death mote weep and plain,[4]
Though in this world he havè care and wo."[5] 445–463.

The answer to these questions he expressly leaves to

[1] Esteemed, regarded.
[2] Cowers.
[3] To refrain from.
[4] Sorrow, grieve.
[5] The same sentiment is expressed more briefly in *Troilus and Cressida*, book iii., lines 1016–1019.

theologians; all that he can do is to record the fact that suffering on a great scale exists in a world ruled over by a God of love.

But of all these questions the one connected with God's foreknowledge and man's free-will seems to have had for the poet a special fascination. To it he makes various references. Sometimes they are serious, as in 'Troilus and Cressida;' sometimes jocose, as in the tale of the Nun's Priest. While in this latter production he evinces full acquaintance with the metaphysical discussions that have prevailed upon the subject, his treatment of it in places reaches almost the point of burlesque. Even the fox who is to lie in wait with the intent of seizing the cock has been predestined to do that work—"forncast by high imagination," the poet tells us. It is easy to get a false view of the real Chaucer from the frequency of allusions of this sort. Interest in the question of the freedom of man's will, coupled with his environment of necessity, furnishes, of course, no presumption of personal piety. It is with the discussion of this particular subject, indeed, that Milton represents the more intellectual devils as beguiling their time, as soon as they had recovered, in a measure, from the stunning overthrow which had landed them in the bottomless pit. Still, it must always be a matter of interest to every thoughtful man who reflects upon his own moral responsibility in a world in which he finds himself at times the master, and at times the sport, of circumstances. If the witness of his own words can be trusted, questions of this nature had a peculiar attraction for the poet. It was doubtless due, in part, to his familiarity with them that

he attained at one period the reputation of being a sacred theologian. His references to them, and his discussions of them, might naturally mislead men as to the real nature of his religious feelings, inasmuch as these are subjects in which it is comparatively easy to mistake an intellectual interest for a spiritual one.

In a discussion of a question about which, in most particulars, the evidence is too slight to furnish justification for positive statement, I have sought to indicate what, on the whole, may be regarded as the most reasonable, or at any rate as the most plausible, view of the sentiments Chaucer held. But it would be folly to maintain that anywhere has been discovered, or by any one can be discovered, the certain explanation of the apparently conflicting utterances that are found in his writings. A general impression may be reached, which the individual observer may come to look upon as fairly satisfactory after he has taken a careful survey of the whole field. His conclusions may at least be satisfactory to himself if he keeps steadily in view that, in spite of his utmost efforts, they will, in most instances, have nothing more in their favor than a high degree of probability. They may be entitled to consideration if he does not seek to impose upon others theories which, to his own mind, serve to explain inconsistencies and to reconcile contradictions of statement. In the complete absence of positive evidence, however, he cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that different views, though not so plausible, may, after all, be the ones that are really true. The poet may never have arrived at fixed standards of belief or of disbelief upon the subjects which certainly engaged

much of his attention. He may all his life have been contented, as were apparently many men of the Renaissance, with a creed that had little more than a faint perfume of religion about it. Even were we to deem him so thorough a rationalist as to dissent entirely from the established faith, he may have had occasional fits of belief in Christianity, as many sceptics have had before and since. Still, while his actual sentiments must always remain largely a matter of doubt, there can hardly be two opinions as to his general habit of mind and his way of looking at life. As there is in him no trace of the reformer, so there is none of the ascetic. While I have noted that Chaucer was profoundly affected by the "weeping and wailing, care and other sorrow"—to use his own words—which go to make up so much of the life of most of us, I have not sought to imply that he shared at all in the feelings of those who seem to think that, in order to be heroic, one must be miserable, or at least uncomfortable. He had no belief in the necessary mission of pain to sanctify or to elevate, no sympathy with the choice of a career of aimless self-sacrifice. Utterly foreign, indeed, to his temperament was that view of religion which consecrates suffering, which looks upon misery as something desirable for its own sake, which insists that the flesh shall be mortified in order that the spiritual nature may be more effectually quickened. He stood at the very opposite pole from those to whom self-denial has become such a delight that to indulge in pleasure begins to assume at last the character of penance. He was the apostle of the gladness of life, of the joy of living for the mere delight of living. Whether

his views be right or wrong, they have not been so abundantly manifested in English literature as to bring any apprehension of their ultimate prevalence to the most sombre-minded. Nor need we, on that account, feel called upon to look askance at the one English author who represents for us most perfectly that limited class of men of our race who consider the world as, on the whole, a very good world, and are not in the least disposed to regard it merely as a vale of tears.

BIBLIOTHECA
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APPENDIX

THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

THE statements made in the discussion of the genuineness of the 'Romance of the Rose' were based upon a minute examination of its text and of that of Chaucer's undisputed writings. As it was not desirable to cumber the pages with these details, they have been reserved for an Appendix.

It is the matter of vocabulary that first comes up for consideration (see pages 25–29 of this volume). In support of the view that there is nothing exceptional in the number of peculiar words found in the 'Romance of the Rose,' the following lists are subjoined of the words peculiar to the tale of Sir Thopas and to the general Prologue of the 'Canterbury Tales.' In the former there are 207 lines. In it are to be found exclusively the following words, or senses of words:

Aketoun, 149; ambel (*n.*), 174; brembre, 35; charbocle, 160; ciclatoun, 23; ciprees, 170; clowe-gilofre, 51; comyn, 144; cordewane, 21; dappel-gray, 173; dextrer, 202; fit (*n.*), 177; gingebreed, 143; gore (in sense of 'garment'), 78; haunt (in sense of 'place of resort'), 100; jambeux, 164; Jewes werk, 153; lake, 147; launcegay, 41; lere (*n.*), 146; love-drury, 184; love-longinge, 61, 139; maselyn, 141; notemuge, 52; payndemain, 14; place (in sense of 'manor-house'), 9; quyrboilly, 164; rewelboon, 167; rode (*n.*), 16; scarlet, 16; spelle (*n.*), 182; staf-slinge, 118; symphonye, 104; thrustelcock, 58; trye (*a.*), 145; verrayment, 2; wodedowve, 59; wonger, 201; woon (a 'region of country' as an abode, not a 'dwelling'), 90.

The general Prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales' consists of 858 lines, and presents the following words, or senses of words, not found elsewhere in Chaucer's undisputed writings. It will be seen that they exceed the proportion given on page 28:

Achatours, 568; amblere, 469; anlas, 357; apiked, 365; arrerage, 602; aryve, 60, or armee, the other reading, in the sense of 'an armed expedition'; assise, 314; astored, 609; avaunce (*v. i.*), 246.

Barres (in sense of 'ornaments of a girdle'), 329; bawdrik, 116; beggestere, 242; blankmanger, 387; bokeler, 112; botes, 203, 273; bracer, 111; breem, 350; bretherhed, 511; bynne, 593; bismotered, 76; (am) bythoght, 767.

Ceruce, 630; chaunterie, 510; chaped, 366; chapeleyne (in sense of 'secretary,' 'amanuensis'), 164; chiknes, 380; clasped, 273; conscience (in sense of 'pity,' 'tender-heartedness'), 142, 150; cope, 260; cryke, 409.

Dayerie, 597; digestible, 437; dokked, 590; drogges, 426; dyere, 362.

Ecclesiaste, 708; envyned, 342.

Farsed, 233; ferrer, 835 (*ferre* in 48); ferreste, 494; fetisly, 124; fithele, 296; flex, 676; floytinge, 91; forpyned, 205; forster, 117; fyr-reed, 624.

Galingale, 381; garleek, 634; gerner, 593; gipser, 357; girles, 664; girt, 'girded' (*p. p.*), 329; glaringe, 684; gobet, 696; goliardeys, 560; grys (*n.*), 194; gynglen, 170.

Haberdassher, 361; harlot, 647; harre, 550; haunt (in sense of 'practice,' 'skill'), 447; heeth, 6, 606; hipes, 472; hoomly, 328; hostelrye, 23, 718, 722; housholdere, 339; hindreste, 622.

Knarre, 549; knobbes, 633.

Large (*adv.*; in sense of 'broadly'), 734; lazar, 242, 245; leed, 202; licentiat, 220; lipsed, 264; lodemenage, 403; lovyer, 80; luce, 350; liveree, 363.

Marshal, 752; medlee (*adj.*), 328; mormal, 386; mortreux, 384; motlee, 271.

Neet (*n.*), 597; nyghtertale, 97; notheed, 109.

Offertorie, 710; offrynge, 450; ounces (in sense of 'small portions'), 677; outridere, 166; overeste, 290; overlippe, 133; oynons, 634; oynement, 631.

Parisshens, 482, 488; parvys, 310; pers, 439; pilwe-beer, 694; pitaunce, 224; poraille, 247; poudre-marchant, 381; practisour, 422; prikasour, 189; pulle * * * a fynch (phrase), 652; pultrye, 598; purchasour, 318; purfiled, 193.

Rage (*v.*), 257; reportour, 814; reule (*n.*), 173; reysed, 54; riche (*adv.*), 609; roost (*n.*), 206; roste, 383, 147; rote, 236; by rote (phrase), 327; rouncy, 390; rudeliche, 734.

Sangwin (*a.*), 333; sangwin (*n.*), 439, sawceflem, 625; scarsly (in sense of 'parsimoniously'), 583; scoleye, 302; sellers (in sense of 'givers'), 248; semi-cope, 262; sendal, 440; sessiouns, 355; shire, 15, 584; shirreve, 359; sholdred, 549; snewed, 345; soberly, 289; stemed, 202; stepe, 201; stewe (in sense of 'fish-pond'), 350; stot (in sense of 'horse'), 615; streite (*adv.*), 457; strike, 676; surcote, 617; swinkere, 531.

Tabard, 541; taffata, 440; taille, 570; takel, 106; tapicer, 362; tart, 381; thresshe (*v. i.*), 536; tollen, 562; tretys, 152; trussed, 681.

Undergrowe, 156.

Vavasour, 360; vernicle, 685.

Wantownnesse, 264; wastel-breed, 147; waterlees, 180; webbe, 362; by weste (phrase), 388; werte, 555; whelkes, 632; worsted, 262; wrighte, 614; wympled, 470.

Yeddinges, 237; yeldhalle, 370; yelding, 596. (167.)

These lists do not pretend to absolute accuracy. Until a complete concordance to Chaucer's works has been prepared, certainty cannot well be claimed for every instance given. Still, they will not be found to vary materially from the actual facts, and it is possible, if not probable, that some words in the 'Prologue' have

not been reckoned. For the sake of the argument it will be conceded that twenty per cent. are mistakes, though I do not believe the errors will amount to as much as five per cent. Even with the concession of twenty per cent. the excess in the proportionate number of peculiar words in these two pieces over the number found in the 'Romance of the Rose' is remarkable.

Let us pass now to the peculiar usages which are identical in Chaucer's undisputed writings and in the 'Romance of the Rose.' When these are considered in detail the agreement between the two becomes very marked. To bring out this fact more prominently, the usage of Chaucer's two contemporaries, Gower and Barbour, will be subjoined in every instance. In the discussion these peculiar words and phrases were divided into five classes. Here will be given the evidence upon which the statements were founded. The words belonging to the first class considered are *iwis*, *certes*, *certain*, *alas*, *parde*, *every del*, *never a del*, and *everichon*. (See pages 90 and 91 of this volume.) The following list will show the comparative extent of their use in the writers or writings named. The figures (1), (2), and (3) indicate the position of the word in the line. When it is the first word, it is denoted by (1); when the last, by (3); and (2) is any place between. Even in a detail so slight as this, the resemblance of Chaucer's usage to that of the 'Romance of the Rose' is striking and suggestive.

'*Iwis*.'

Romance of the Rose:
(1). 357, 2846, 7562.
(2). 279, 871, 1160, 6667, 6932, 7398.
(3). 44, 69, 160, 281, 350, 470, 519, 555, 630, 645, 708, 960, 967, 982, 1062, 1153, 1171, 1182, 1185, 1242, 1343, 1576, 1749, 2158, 2788, 2914, 3244, 3265, 3429, 3674, 3928, 4029, 4781, 5235, 5367, 5554, 5790, 5825, 5896, 5915, 5934, 6633, 6699, 6879, 7147, 7163, 7216, 7396, 7467, 7569. (59.)

Death of Blanche:
(1) and (2). None.
(3). 657, 1267.

House of Fame:
(1). 326.
(2). 982.
(3). 809, 827, 836, 882, 1291, 1445, 1470, 1514, 1565, 1838, 1843, 1922, 1988, 2060. (16.)

Legend of Good Women:
(1). None.
(2). 1985.
(3). 1569, 2251, 2545.

Parliament of Fowls:
(1). None.
(2). 6, 697.
(3). None.

Minor poems:
(2). Anelida and Arcite, 335.
(3). Complaint to his Lady, 48.

Troilus and Cressida:
(1). ii., 239, 846, 1398; iii., 105, 314, 649, 1102, 1110, 1303; iv., 21, 903, 1074, 1330; v., 1099, 1401, 1405.
(2). i., 415, 657; ii., 87, 190, 835, 880, 887, 898, 1096, 1527, 1669; iii., 167, 848, 927, 1211, 1494, 1686; iv., 298, 442, 689, 691, 846, 1519, 1528, 1574, 1660; v., 118,

Troilus and Cressida:
455, 467, 510, 650, 663, 974, 1148, 1732.
(3). i., 425, 802, 893, 1019; ii., 128, 228, 312, 365, 387, 729, 891, 1047, 1635; iii., 170, 500, 1031, 1122, 1181; iv., 1034, 1040, 1051, 1375; v., 367, 935, 961, 1156, 1425, 1516, 1685. (80.)

Canterbury Tales:
(1). Miller's, 519; Canon's Yeoman's, 348.
(2). Miller's, 91; Prol. to Cook's, 38; Prol. to Nun's Priest's, 51; Prol. to Pardoner's, 41; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 458; Summoner's, 293, 508; Prol. to Squire's, 16.
Canterbury Tales:
(3). Sir Thopas, 79; Prol. to Nun's Priest's, 2; Nun's Priest's, 379, 622; Prol. to Friar's, 31; Franklin's, 635, 765; Second Nun's, 263, 439; Prol. to Canon's Yeoman's, 64, 136, 270; Canon's Yeoman's, 96, 352; Manciple's, 173. (25.)

Gower's Confessio Amantis:
(1) and (2). None.
(3). vol. i., p. 85, p. 240, p. 282, p. 315, p. 321; vol. ii., p. 20, p. 212, p. 214. (8.)

Barbour's Bruce:
(2). xvii., 896.
(3). xvi., 654.

'*Certes.*'

Romance of the Rose:
(1). 2743, 4068, 5185, 5381.
(2). 374, 439, 651, 689, 1741, 1766, 1821, 2082, 4565, 4664, 5979, 6043, 6142, 6231, 6401, 7638.
(3). 5542, 6800. (22.)

Death of Blanche:
(1). 92.
(2). 84, 204, 310, 548, 853, 908, 1037, 1117. (9.)

House of Fame:
(1). 1986.
(2). 1684, 1693, 1697, 2038. (5.)

Parliament of Fowls:
(1). None.
(2). 424, 632.

Legend of Good Women:
(1). None.
(2). 1082, 1178, 1384, 1628, 1982, 2530, 2699. (7.)

Minor poems:
A. B. C. (1), 98; (2), 28, 55; Pity (2), 76; Complaint of Mars (2), 194; Complaint of Venus (2), 25, 49, 55, 57; Anelida and Arcite (2), 241, 256; Scogan (2), 29; Purse (2), 4. (13.)

Troilus and Cressida:
(1). None.
Troilus and Cressida:
(2). i., 572, 773; ii., 533; iii., 809, 1296, 1478; iv., 990, 1025, 1440, 1625; v., 408, 1079.
(3). iii., 1266. (13.)

Canterbury Tales:
(1). Nun's Priest's, 106, 483, 535, 574; Clerk's, 736; Merchant's, 1102; Canon's Yeoman's, 25; Manciple's, 12.
(2). Knight's, 17, 69, 287, 379, 407; Miller's, 533, 593; Shipman's, 107, 349; Prol. to Sir Thopas, 18; Prol. to Melibeus, 21; Nun's Priest's, 92, 204, 466, 478; Doctor's, 133, 274; Prol. to Pardoner's, 121; Pardoner's, 427; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 609; Wife of Bath's, 237, 324, 352, 382; Friar's, 12, 136; Summoner's, 425; Clerk's, 50, 603, 914, 1103; Merchant's, 95, 926, 937; Prol. to Squire's, 24; Squire's, 188, 541; Franklin's, 69, 335, 589, 639, 860; Prol. to Canon's Yeoman's, 41; Canon's Yeoman's, 467; Manciple's, 101. (53.)

Gower's Confessio Amantis:
(2). vol. i., p. 46, p. 66, p. 85, p. 161, p. 176, p. 224, p. 246; vol. ii., p. 59, p. 93, p. 94, p. 111, p. 112, p. 130, p. 275, p. 309, p. 312, p. 361, p. 380, p. 396; vol. iii., pp. 9, 10, 25, 30, 59, 253, 301, 305, 342. (28.)

Barbour's Bruce:
(1). xi., 646; xvi., 595.
(2). i., 21; v., 237; vi., 13, 153; vii., 259; x., 273, 541; xi., 80; xii., 231, 254; xvi., 277, 279; xvii., 52, 726; xviii., 282; xx., 539. (18.)

'Certain.'

Romance of the Rose:
(1). 4329, 5128, 5396, 5928, 6070.
(2). 245, 3209, 3723, 4341, 4475, 4521, 4555, 6089.
(3). 809, 5073, 6102, 7505. (17.)

Death of Blanche: None.

Parliament of Fowls: None.

House of Fame:
(1). 363, 614, 724, 1881.
(2). 336, 1112, 1336, 1380, 1691, 1698, 1731, 2002.
(3). 160, 502, 929. (15.)

Legend of Good Women:
(1). None.
(2). 728, 2549.
(3). 2519.

Minor poems:
A. B. C. (3), 169.

Troilus and Cressida:
(1). None.
(2). i., 492, 697; ii., 390, 724; iii., 1096, 1299, 1631; iv., 605, 945, 1118, 1202; v., 55.
(3). ii., 1569; iii., 789, 1154, 1276; iv., 1058; v., 1128. (18.)

Canterbury Tales:
(1). Summoner's, 244; Merchant's, 303, 738.
(2). Man of Law's, 109; Prioress's, 124; Monk's, 5; Nun's Priest's, 497; Doctor's, 237; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 9, 71, 331, 438; Clerk's, 68; Merchant's, 161, 778; Franklin's, 51; Canon's Yeoman's, 452; Prol. to Manciple's, 34.
(3). Knight's, 281, 1973; Miller's, 309, 483; Prol. to Man of Law's, 45; Man of Law's, 786; Shipman's, 358; Prioress's, 211; Monk's, 765; Doctor's, 89; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 19; Wife of of Bath's, 149, 327; Friar's, 189; Summoner's, 85, 209, 320; Clerk's, 253, 590, 638, 904; Merchant's, 174, 227, 1070; Franklin's, 45, 379; Second Nun's, 282; Manciple's, 45, 209. (47.)

Gower's Confessio Amantis: None.

Barbour's Bruce: None.

'Alas.'

Romance of the Rose:
(1). 2427, 2600, 3527, 4433, 4515.
(2). 4107, 4122, 4315.
(3). 4104, 4123, 6030. (11.)

Death of Blanche:
(1). 90, 598, 616, 656, 707, 896, 1187, 1191, 1308.
(2). 619, 686, 1244, 1301, 1307.
(3). 103, 661. (16.)

House of Fame:
(1). 265, 300, 301, 315, 332, 1562, 1631, 1655.
(2). 170.
(3). 157, 268, 294, 355. (13.)

Parliament of Fowls: None.

Legend of Good Women:
(1). 66, 658, 805, 838, 1027, 1305, 1824, 2184, 2187, 2214, 2379, 2484, 2689, 2716.
(2). 756, 799, 824, 840, 847, 1308, 1341, 2696.
(3). 836, 876, 1658, 2557, 2713. (27.)

Minor poems:
(1). A. B. C., 124; Pity, 23, 81, 88, 117; Complaint of Mars, 115, 138; Anelida and Arcite, 103, 162, 229, 253, 255; Former Age, 31, 61; Scogan, 6, 13, 20; Complaint to his Lady, 39, 106.
(2). A. B. C., 154; Complaint of Mars, 90, 106, 159, 164, 207; Anelida and Arcite, 238; Former Age, 61; Complaint to his Lady, 92.
(3). Complaint of Mars, 136. (29.)

Troilus and Cressida:
(1). i., 419, 551; ii., 330, 336, 411, 414, 774, 1046; iii., 802, 808, 1013, 1050, 1101, 1457; iv., 19, 96, 265, 319, 743, 857, 901, 1232, 1605; v., 39, 237, 384, 611, 692, 731, 736, 1058, 1064, 1163, 1261, 1678, 1682.
(2). i., 461, 583, 778, 828, 873; ii., 409, 420, 433, 771, 1571; iii., 69, 804, 806, 850, 1010, 1077, 1103, 1172, 1423, 1427, 1436, 1474, 1479, 1484; iv., 13, 110, 205, 260, 273, 283, 294, 331, 576, 747, 833, 851, 913, 967, 1319; v., 226, 384, 679, 689, 712, 744, 936, 1054, 1095, 1254, 1258, 1275, 1554, 1686, 1692.
(3). i., 834; ii., 424, 459, 1348, 1472; iii., 843, 1557; iv., 92, 288, 792, 1235; v., 58, 606, 1268. (104.)

Canterbury Tales:
(1). Knight's, 467, 684, 1369; Miller's, 567; Reeve's, 189, 281, 298; Man of Law's, 169, 183, 217, 533; Prol. to Monk's, 21, 61; Monk's, 133, 423, 439, 504, 678, 700, 703; Nun's Priest's, 89, 101, 505, 519, 520, 599; Doctor's, 227; Prol. to Pardoner's, 7, 12; Pardoner's, 55, 62, 271, 438; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 614; Wife of Bath's, 212; Friar's, 314; Clerk's, 487; Merchant's, 825, 1094, 1145; Franklin's, 614, 627, 735, 785, 831; Canon's Yeoman's, 397; Prol. to Manciple's, 51; Manciple's, 169, 185, 187.
(2). Knight's, 365; Miller's, 336, 337, 416, 421, 567, 630; Man of Law's, 510, 712, 719, 757; Shipman's, 118; Monk's, 133, 439, 455; Nun's Priest's, 184, 225, 464; Doctor's, 215; Pardoner's, 265; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 474, 614; Wife of Bath's, 202, 242; Clerk's, 195, 195; Merchant's, 513, 584, 1011, 1085, 1095, 1095, 1122; Squire's, 491, 613; Franklin's, 125, 785, 831; Manciple's, 143.
(3). Knight's, 215, 498, 1094, 1504, 1532; Miller's, 100, 212, 302, 563; Man of Law's, 23, 95, 205, 211; Prioress's, 108; Monk's, 379, 459, 668; Prol. to Nun's Priest's, 7; Nun's Priest's, 349, 599; Doctor's, 241; Prol. to Pardoner's, 7; Pardoner's, 441; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 166; Clerk's, 507; Merchant's, 30, 625; Franklin's, 97, 292, 637, 677, 701, 785; Canon's Yeoman's, 190; Prol. to Manciple's, 88. (124.)

Barbour's Bruce:
(1). v., 161; xx., 271.
(2). xviii., 49; xx., 266, 609.
(3). xx., 263, 446. (7.)

Gower's Confessio Amantis:
(1). vol. i., p. 328; vol. iii., p. 59.
(2). vol. i., p. 74, p. 149; vol. ii., p. 30, p. 49, p. 116, p. 322, p. 383; vol. iii., p. 321.
(3). vol. ii., p. 258; vol. iii., p. 59. (12.)

The French form, *Helas*, occurs in Gower, however, six times. See vol. ii., p. 50, p. 116, p. 121, p. 300, and vol. iii., p. 286, p. 291.

'*Pardee.*'

Romance of the Rose:
(1). None.
(2). 6559.
(3). 4433, 4547, 4659, 5913, 5972, 6127, 6209, 6389, 6853, 7211, 7512, 7525. (13.)

Death of Blanche:
(1). None.
(2). 721.
(3). 1046. (2.)

House of Fame:
(1). 860.
(2). 1000, 1032.
(3). 134, 404, 575, 840, 1864, 1896. (9.)

Parliament of Fowls:
(1). None.
(2). 571.
(3). 509. (2.)

Legend of Good Women:
(1). None.
(2). None.
(3). 16, 508, 515, 533, 2179. (5.)

Minor poems: None.

Troilus and Cressida:
(1). None.
(2). i., 197, 1047; ii., 366, 497, 759, 995, 1319, 1408, 1523; iii., 913; iv., 524, 541, 1090, 1613.
(3). i., 717, 845; ii., 669, 732; iii., 337, 399, 635; iv., 975, 1013, 1368, 1584; v., 142. (26.)

Canterbury Tales:
(1). Shipman's, 188; Wife of Bath's, 94; Prol. to Friar's, 16; Merchant's, 1053; Franklin's, 717; Prol. to Canon's Yeoman's, 389.
(2). Prol. to Miller's, 50; Shipman's, 219; Prol. to Nun's Priest's, 18; Friar's, 170; Prol. to Summoner's, 11; Prol. to Franklin's, 24; Prol. to Canon's Yeoman's, 290, 394.
(3). General Prologue, 563; Knight's, 454, 2226; Man of Law's, 758; Sir Thopas, 76; Nun's Priest's, 108; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 200, 310, 335, 712; Friar's, 256; Prol. to Merchant's, 24; Prol. to Canon's Yeoman's, 442; Canon's Yeoman's, 228, 436. (29.)

Gower's Confessio Amantis: None.

Barbour's Bruce:
(3). v., 545; vi., 357; vii., 436; ix., 84; xix., 689. (5.)

'*Every del*' (*as final ryme*).

Romance of the Rose:
126, 137, 272, 896, 1076, 1596, 2469, 2889, 3158, 3271, 5308, 5868, 6017, 7655. (14.)

Death of Blanche:
222, 232, 698, 846, 864, 1014, 1041. (7).

House of Fame:
65, 880, 1129. (3.)

Legend of Good Women: None.

Parliament of Fowls: None.

Minor poems: None.

Troilus and Cressida:
ii., 590; iv., 1059. (2.)

Canterbury Tales:
General Prologue, 368; Knight's, 1233; Miller's, 117, 183, 558; Reeve's, 395; Shipman's, 419; Nun's Priest's, 295; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 162, 445, 538; Summoner's, 98; Merchant's, 264; Franklin's, 560; Canon's Yeoman's, 258. (15.)

Gower's Confessio Amantis:
i., p. 31, p. 48, p. 141, p. 201, p. 245, p. 307, p. 310; ii., p. 104, p. 134, p. 225, p. 268; iii., p. 33, p. 57, p. 60, p. 68, p. 215, p. 266, p. 348. (18.)

Barbour's Bruce—*Everilk deill:*
xvi., 326; xviii., 250. (2.)

'*Never a del*' (*as final ryme*).

Romance of the Rose:
28, 232, 460, 805, 1296, 5139, 5261, 6036, 6400, 6479, 7373. (11.)
Death of Blanche: 543, 937, 1147. (3.)
House of Fame: None.
Legend of Good Women: None.
Parliament of Fowls: None.
Minor poems: None.
Troilus and Cressida: iii., 708.

Canterbury Tales:
Knight's, 2206; Shipman's, 403; Nun's Priest's, 14, 336, 429; Pardoner's, 208; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 561; Friar's, 257; Merchant's, 99; Manciple's, 132. (10.)
Gower's Confessio Amantis:
vol. i., p. 33; vol. ii., p. 332. (2.)
Barbour's Bruce: None.

'*Everichoon*' (*as final ryme*).

Romance of the Rose:
944, 5818, 6925, 6997. (4.)
Death of Blanche: None.
House of Fame:
337, 1660, 1717, 1772, 1776. (5.)
Parliament of Fowls: None.
Legend of Good Women:
780, 2567. (2.)
Minor poems: None.
Troilus and Cressida:
i., 176, 847, 912; ii., 1598; iii., 412, 665; iv., 778, 867, 949, 971; v., 1867. (11.)
Canterbury Tales:
General Prologue, 31, 747; Prol. to Miller's, 5; Prol. to Man of Law's, 58; Man of Law's, 232, 555; Prol. to Shipman's, 2; Prol. to Monk's, 11; Monk's, 97, 165; Prol. to Nun's Priest's, 53; Pardoner's, 482; Friar's, 144; Prol. to Summoner's, 34; Summoner's, 50, 353; Merchant's, 240; Franklin's, 101, 431, 573; Canon's Yeoman's, 453; Manciple's, 192; 200; Prol. to Parson's, 15. (24.)
Gower's Confessio Amantis:
vol. i., p. 113, p. 185; vol. iii., p. 89, p. 105, p. 240. (5.)
Barbour's Bruce:
'*Everilkan*,' i., 452; iii., 21, 221, 743; v., 103, 296; vi., 123, 245; viii., 2; ix., 346, 451; x., 43, 760; xii., 72, 95, 405; xiii., 73; xiv., 48; xv., 155, 175, 509; xvi., 211, 309; xix., 33; xx., 187. (25.)

Of these words, *certes* is the only one used to a large extent in prose, and *certain* as an adverb seems to be confined to Chaucer and the 'Romance of the Rose.'

The adverbial phrases made up of nouns preceded by *without* or *out of* make up the second class. (See pages 91–94.)

(1). '*Withouten doute.*' (2). '*Out of doute.*'

Romance of the Rose:
(1). 2967, 3615. (2.)
(2). 2102, 4677, 5110, 7607. (4.)
Death of Blanche:
(1). 820.
Death of Blanche:
(2). None.
House of Fame:
(1). None.
(2). 812, 1037, 2005. (3.)

Parliament of Fowls:
(1) and (2). None.
Legend of Good Women:
(1). 383, 721, 1932. (3.)
(2). 2502.
Minor poems: None.
Troilus and Cressida:
(1). ii., 735, 1392; iv., 404. (3.)
(2). i., 152; iii., 518; iv., 1571; v., 68, 1518, 1644. (6).
Canterbury Tales:
(1). Knight's, 464; Man of Law's, 636, 679; Shipman's, 406; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 654; Merchant's, 939; Prol. to Canon's Yeoman's, 362. (7.)
Canterbury Tales:
(2). Miller's, 375; Reeve's, 67; Man of Law's, 292; Doctor's, 157; Pardoner's, 360; Wife of Bath's, 122; Clerk's, 848; Merchant's, 787, 841, 900. (10.)
Gower's Confessio Amantis:
(1). vol. ii., p. 24.
(2). None.
Barbour's Bruce:
'*But dout*,' iii., 641; xv., 421.
'*Withouten dout*,' iv., 136.
'*Forouten dout*,' viii., 387; x., 383, 461; in xii., 64 (=fear).

(1). '*Withouten drede.*'	(2). '*Out of drede.*'
Romance of the Rose: (1). 1442, 2199, 2251, 2539, 4503, 6214, 6885. (7.) (2). 131, 1038, 1322, 5263, 5491, 6947, 7250, 7692. (8).	Troilus and Cressida: (2). i., 775; ii., 746, 833, 1175; iii., 1720; iv., 72, 1455; v., 759, 980, 1090, 1751. (11.)
Death of Blanche: (1). 280, 1073, 1096. (3.) (2). None.	Canterbury Tales: (1). Prol. to Man of Law's, 29; Man of Law's, 98; Franklin's, 816; Second Nun's, 329; Canon's Yeoman's, 218. (5.)
House of Fame: (1). 292, 830, 1913. (3.) (2). 1142, 1456. (2.)	(2). Man of Law's, 795; Monk's, 296; Clerk's, 578, 853; Second Nun's, 155. (5.)
Parliament of Fowls: (1). 52. (2). 81.	Gower's Confessio Amantis: (1). vol. ii., p. 33, p. 129; vol. iii., p. 43, p. 51, p. 194. (5.) (2). None.
Legend of Good Women: (1). 464. (2). None.	Barbour's Bruce: '*But drede*,' iv., 277, 506. '*Forouten drede*,' v., 579; vii., 195. '*Withouten dreid*,' xvi., 324; xx., 169.
Minor poems: (1). None. (2). Anelida and Arcite, 303.	
Troilus and Cressida: (1). ii., 672; iii., 418, 490, 1741. (4.)	

Where *drede* has its ordinary modern signification of 'dread,' it is of course not reckoned.

(1). '*Withouten more.*'	(2). '*Withouten mo.*'
Romance of the Rose: (1). 2610, 3195, 3763, 5097, 7675. (2). None. (5.)	House of Fame: None.
Death of Blanche: None.	Parliament of Fowls: None.
	Legend of Good Women: None.
	Minor poems: None.

Troilus and Cressida:
(1). ii., 1666; iii., 973, 1156; iv., 133, 376, 1197, 1498, 1701. (8.)
(2). iv., 1125, 1641. (2.)

Canterbury Tales:
(1). Knight's, 1458, 1945; Merchant's, 695; Second Nun's, 374. (4.)
(2). Reeve's, 50; Second Nun's, 207. (2.)

Gower's Confessio Amantis:
(1). vol. i., p. 14; vol. ii., 246. (2.)
(2). None.

Barbour's Bruce:
'*Withouten mair*,' iv., 565.
'*Withouten ma*,' viii., 31; xix., 656.

Mar or *ma* preceded by *forouten* or *but* occurs, however, in Barbour's 'Bruce' twenty-two times.

(1). '*Withouten wordes more.*' (2). '*Withouten wordes mo.*'

Romance of the Rose:
(1). None.
(2). 641, 6135. (2.)

Death of Blanche: None.

House of Fame: (1) and (2). None.

Parliament of Fowls:
(1) and (2). None.

Legend of Good Women:
(1) and (2). None.

Minor poems: (1) and (2). None.

Troilus and Cressida:
(1). iv., 664; v., 56, 167. (3.)
(2). ii., 1405; iii., 234; iv., 219, 500; v., 764. (5.)

Canterbury Tales:
(1). None.
(2). Prologue, 808; Miller's, 222, 464, 631; Pardoner's, 216; Prol. to Franklin's, 30; Canon's Yeoman's, 244. (7.)

Gower's Confessio Amantis: None.

Barbour's Bruce: None.

The second group of this second class consists of expressions that are of much less importance. As they have been sufficiently considered in the discussion of the subject, the references to the passages where they occur will be omitted.

The third class is made up of interjectional phrases formed by the combinations of the noun *sooth* and the adverbs *soothly* and *shortly* with the verbs *say* and *tell*. (See pages 94–98.) The following references will show the comparative usage:

(1). '(*The*) *sooth* (*for*) *to say.*' (2). '*Soothly* (*for*) *to say.*'

Romance of the Rose:
(1). 117, 3008, 3252, 3649, 3678, 4644, 5538, 5589, 5712, 5791, 6144, 6793. (12.)
(2). 3771, 5035. (2.)

Death of Blanche:
(1). 321, 460, 818, 856, 989, 1090, 1181, 1194, 1221. (9.)
(2). None.

House of Fame:
(1). 563, 960, 1368, 1917. (4.)
(2). None.

Parliament of Fowls:
(1). 78.
(2). 270.

Legend of Good Women:
(1). 588, 715. (2.)
(2). None.

Minor poems:
(1). Pity, 96; Anelida and Arcite, 85. (2.)
(2). None.

Troilus and Cressida:
(1). i., 12, 591, 712; ii., 520,

Troilus and Cressida:
621, 684, 986, 1356, 1516, 1559; iii., 355, 430, 993, 1530, 1793; iv., 503, 797; v., 1012, 1035. (19.)
(2). None.

Canterbury Tales:
(1). Miller's, 151; Nun's Priest's, 201; Merchant's, 838; Squire's, 582; Canon's Yeoman's, 274. (5.)
(2). Prologue, 468; Canon's Yeoman's, 100. (2.)

Gower's Confessio Amantis:
(1). vol. i., p. 297; vol. ii., p. 91, p. 373, p. 382; vol. iii., p. 121, p. 160, p. 378. (7.)
(2). vol. i., p. 177.

Barbour's Bruce:
(1). xix., 41, 800.

There are several variant forms of these two phrases, which it has not been deemed worth while to particularize. The same thing can be said of the phrases made up by combining this same noun or adverb with the verb *tell*.

(1). '(*The*) *sooth* (*for*) *to tell*.'

Romance of the Rose:
(1). 973, 1463, 1528. (3.)
(2). None.

Death of Blanche: None.

House of Fame:
(1). 1388, 1509, 1804, 1842. (4.)
(2). None.

Parliament of Fowls: None.

Legend of Good Women: None.

Minor poems: None.

(2). '*Soothly* (*for*) *to tell*.'

Troilus and Cressida:
(1). iii., 650, 1598; iv., 47; v., 1028. (4.)
(2). None.

Canterbury Tales:
(1). Knight's, 2180.
(2). Knight's, 341.

Gower's Confessio Amantis:
(1). vol. i., p. 176, p. 283.
(2). None.

Barbour's Bruce: None.

In the following phrases the variation '*to tell shortly*' will be found in four of the references:

(1). '*Shortly* (*for*) *to tell*.'

Romance of the Rose:
(1). 1501, 1528. (2.)

Death of Blanche:
(1). 68, 306, 1239, always in the form 'To telle shortly.' (3.)
(2). None.

House of Fame:
(1). 242.
(2). None.

Legend of Good Women:
(1). 2170.
(2). 2354.

Minor poems: None.

Troilus and Cressida:
(1). v., 1826.

(2). '*Shortly* (*for*) *to say*.'

Troilus and Cressida:
(2). iii., 548, 1117, 1156; v., 1009. (4.)

Canterbury Tales:
(1). Man of Law's, 330; Shipman's, 305. (2.)
(2). Knight's, 483; Reeve's, 277; Man of Law's, 466; Monk's, 55, 365; Pardoner's, 40; Merchant's, 228; Canon's Yeoman's, 206. (8.)

Gower's Confessio Amantis:
(1). None.
(2). vol. iii., p. 269.

Barbour's Bruce: None.

There are many variant forms of these phrases, such as '*to tell in short*,' that have not been included.

The fourth class consists of certain phrases, of which the most important are, *I undertake*, *I dare say*, *I dare tell*, *I guess*, *Trust well*, *Trust me*, *God wot*, and *By God*. (See pages 98–100.)

'*I undertake*.'

Romance of the Rose :
175, 230, 461, 997, 5058. (5.)

Death of Blanche : None.

House of Fame : None.

Parliament of Fowls : None.

Legend of Good Women : None.

Minor poems : None.

Troilus and Cressida : iii., 766.

Canterbury Tales :
Prologue, 288 , Miller's, 346, 389 ; Monk's, 336 ; Nun's Priest's, 391 ; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 592 ; Merchant's, 1073 ; Franklin's, 483. (8.)

Gower's Confessio Amantis : None.

Barbour's Bruce :
'*I underta*,' xiii., 44, 128.
'*I undertake*,' xv., 139.

(1). '*I dare say*,' or '*Dare I say*.'

Romance of the Rose :
(1). 270, 859, 1322, 1766, 1909, 4787, 5943, 7543. (8.)
(2). 1570.

Death of Blanche :
(1). 221, 904, 962, 1002. (4.)
(2). None.

Parliament of Fowls.
(1). 456, 479. (2.)
(2). None.

House of Fame : None.

Legend of Good Women : None.

Minor poems :
(1). Former Age, 27 ; Bukton, 11. (2.)
(2). None.

Troilus and Cressida :
(1). i., 396, 451 ; ii., 173 ; iii., 661, 865, 1266, 1297, 1608 ; iv., 117 ; v., 1168, 1296, 1845. (12.)

(2). '*I dare tell*,' or '*Dare I tell*.'

Troilus and Cressida :
(2). None.

Canterbury Tales :
(1). Knight's, 1028 ; Miller's, 160 ; Man of Law's, 929 ; Doctor's, 15, 49, 99 ; Prol. to Pardoner's, 11 ; Pardoner's, 112 ; Summoner's, 148 ; Clerk's, 255, 814 ; Merchant's, 485 ; Franklin's, 33, 521 ; Second Nun's, 214, Prol. to Canon's Yeoman's, 349, 403 ; Manciple's, 249 (18.)
(2). Squire's, 573.

Gower's Confessio Amantis :
(1). vol. i., p. 228 ; vol. ii., p. 33, p 118, p. 225, p. 278, p. 298, vol. iii., p. 195. (7.)

Barbour's Bruce : xviii., 282.

(1). '*I gesse*.'

Romance of the Rose :
(1). 6921.
(2). 1140, 1281, 3644, 5735, 5997. (5.)

Death of Blanche :
(1). None.
(2). 35.

(2). '*As I gesse*.'

House of Fame : None.

Parliament of Fowls :
(1). 160, 223. (2.)
(2). 200.

Legend of Good Women :
(1). 893, 1073, 1665. (3.)
(2). 419, 986. (2.)

Minor poems :
(1). Bukton, 4.
(2). Complaint of Mars, 195.
Troilus and Cressida :
(1). i., 656, 882 ; ii., 287, 859 ; iii., 1147; iv., 900. (6.)
(2). i.,996; ii.,718; iii.,1727. (3.)
Canterbury Tales :
(1). Prologue, 82 ; Knight's, 192; Monk's, 255; Prol. to Nun's Priest's,4; Summoner's, 1; Franklin's, 845. (6.)
(2). Prologue, 117 ; Knight's, 244 ; Miller's, 281, 458 ; Man of Law's, 148, 990, 1045; Wife of Bath's, 339, 356 ; Summoner's, 557 ; Clerk's, 413 ; Merchant's, 91, 112, 978, 1006; Squire's, 601; Franklin's, 684; Prol. to Canon's Yeoman's, 424 ; Prol. to Parson's, 5. (19.)
'*As that I gesse*,' Shipman's, 385.
Gower's Confessio Amantis :
(1). vol. ii., p. 11, p. 44, p. 59, p. 224; vol. iii., p. 180, p. 351. (6.)
(2). vol. i., p. 5, p. 72. (2.)
'*So that I gesse*,' vol. ii., p. 368.
Barbour's Bruce : None.

'*Trust wel*,' *or* '*Trusteth wel*.'

Romance of the Rose :
170, 263, 649, 673, 5947, 7636. (6.)
House of Fame : 66, 672. (2.)
Parliament of Fowls : None.
Legend of Good Women : None.
Minor poems : None.
Troilus and Cressida :
ii., 1245, 1426; iii., 906; iv., 1667. (4.)
Canterbury Tales :
Man of Law's, 950 ; Nun's Priest's, 204; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 118, 688; Friar's, 258 ; Summoner's, 429 ; Prol. to Parson's, 58. (7.)
Gower's Confessio Amantis :
vol. iii., p. 316.
Barbour's Bruce : None.

'*Trust me*,' *or* '*Trusteth me*.'

Romance of the Rose : 3749.
House of Fame : None.
Parliament of Fowls : None.
Legend of Good Women : None.
Minor poems : None.
Troilus and Cressida :
iv., 1616.
Canterbury Tales :
Monk's, 242 ; Merchant's, 317 ; Second Nun's, 229 ; Prol. to Canon's Yeoman's, 48, 336. (5.)
Gower's Confessio Amantis : None.
Barbour's Bruce : None.

The phrase '*trusteth me well*' is found in Troilus and Cressida, v. 887; in the prologue to the Canon's Yeoman's tale, 395; and in the Summoner's tale, 161.

(1). '*God wot*.' (2). '*God it wot*.'

Romance of the Rose :
(1). 470, 2805, 4522, 6274, 7374, 7683. (6.)
(2). None.
Death of Blanche :
(1). 1237, 1307. (2.)
(2). None.
House of Fame : None.
Parliament of Fowls :
(1). 595, 663. (2.)
(2). None.
Legend of Good Women :
(1). 14, 471, 2512, 2651. (4.)
(2). None.
Minor poems : None.
Troilus and Cressida :
(1). i., 195, 334, 826, 835; ii., 568,

Troilus and Cressida:
686, 1234, 1261, 1263, 1360, 1551; iii., 100, 240, 609, 816, 1084, 1357, 1410, 1481, 1619, 1645; iv., 498, 723, 904; v., 333, 347, 983, 1105, 1604, 1733, 1739.
(2). iv., 696; v., 1713, 1761. (34.)
Canterbury Tales:
(1). Knight's, 28, 424, 662, 2206; Miller's, 183, 606; Man of Law's, 97, 341, 864, 925; Shipman's, 113; Nun's Priest's, 102, 277, 386; Pardoner's, 93; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 41, 663, 703; Friar's, 257, 280, 314; Summoner's, 76, 240, 401; Clerk's, 218, 399, 435; Merchant's, 157, 305, 607, 869, 881, 1131; Squire's, 524, 565; Franklin's, 601; Prol. to Canon's Yeoman's, 170, 286; Prol. to Parson's, 44.
(2). Miller's, 583; Reeve's, 166; Shipman's, 406; Doctor's, 242; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 223, 491, 539; Wife of Bath's, 294; Friar's, 137; Clerk's, 99; Merchant's, 179, 249, 300; Manciple's, 56, 117. (54.)
Gower's Confessio Amantis:
(1). vol. i., pp. 3, 12, 21, 66, 86, 99, 139, 253; vol. ii., pp. 25, 117, 205, 225, 287; vol. iii., pp. 185, 258.
(2). vol. i., p. 89. (16.)
Barbour's Bruce: i., 178, 586. (2.)

'*By God.*'

Romance of the Rose: 3838.
Death of Blanche: 877.
House of Fame: 382, 875, 1561. (3.)
Parliament of Fowls: None.
Legend of Good Women: None.
Minor poems: None.
Troilus and Cressida:
i., 770; ii., 137, 183, 213, 430, 1138, 1237; iii., 120, 663, 869, 1512; iv., 1319; v., 429, 1147. (14.)
Canterbury Tales:
Knight's, 952; Reeve's, 116, 169, 332; Man of Law's, 921; Shipman's, 135, 148, 355, 380, 383, 385, 393, 424; Monk's, 532, 535; Nun's Priest's, 74, 154, 300; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 164, 450, 483, 489, 586, 634, 693; Prol. to Friar's, 28; Friar's, 145; Summoner's, 404, 550; Merchant's, 266; Canon's Yeoman's, 316, 361; Manciple's, 143. (33.)
Gower's Confessio Amantis: None.
Barbour's Bruce: None.

The fifth class consists of invocatory phrases. (See page 101.) Most of these are recorded in the lists of parallel phrases; but the following references are given of the two specifically mentioned in the text:

'*Also* or *So mote I thee.*'

Romance of the Rose:
3086, 4841, 5899. (3.)
Death of Blanche: None.
House of Fame: None.
Parliament of Fowls: None.
Legend of Good Women: None.
Minor poems:
Complaint of Mars, 267.
Troilus and Cressida:
i., 341; v., 1160. (2.)
Canterbury Tales:
Sir Thopas, 106; Nun's Priest's, 156; Prol. to Pardoner's, 23; Prol. to Wife of Bath's, 361, 532; Wife of Bath's, 359; Prol. to Friar's, 7; Prol. to Merchant's, 14. (8.)
Gower's Confessio Amantis: None.
Barbour's Bruce: None.

'*So mote I go.*'

Romance of the Rose:
6486, 6591, 6623. (3.)
Death of Blanche: None.
House of Fame: None.
Parliament of Fowls: None.
Legend of Good Women: None.
Minor poems: None.
Troilus and Cressida:
v., 907, 984. (2.)

Troilus and Cressida:
In iii., 1206 is the variant '*as ever mote I gon.*'
Canterbury Tales:
Prol. to Miller's, 6; Prol. to Nun's Priest's, 50; Prol. to Canon's Yeoman's, 81. (3.)
Gower's Confessio Amantis: None.
Barbour's Bruce: None.

In all of these cases the heading furnishes the normal form or forms. The slight variations required by the necessities of the verse have been rarely indicated; the more important ones have been added separately.

A careful examination of these references will establish three points: First, that there is almost perfect agreement in the usage of these phrases between the 'Romance of the Rose' and the writings of Chaucer, there being, in truth, no greater variation between them than there is between portions of the poet's undisputed works. Secondly, that there is no such agreement between either and the productions of Gower or of Barbour. Thirdly, that throughout every part of the 'Romance of the Rose' there is practical uniformity in the use of the most common and distinctive of these words and phrases. In every part of it can be found employed, to about the same extent, *iwis*, *certes*, *certain*, *every del*, *never a del*, *everichoon*, *withouten* or *out of dread*, *sooth* or *soothly to say*, *I undertake*, *I dare say* or *tell*, *I guess*, *trust well*, and *God wot*. The only exceptions to the universality of this rule are *withouten* or *out of doute*, first appearing in line 2102; *alas*, first appearing in line 2427; *without more*, first appearing in line 2610; and *parde*, first appearing in line 4433. Of how little weight are these exceptions an examination of Chaucer's own usage will make evident. Of how great weight they are in the question as to whether the translation is the work of one or more persons, it is needless to remark.

It remains to say, in conclusion, that the absolute accuracy of this mass of details cannot well be guaranteed. Some instances in which words or phrases occur may have been overlooked. But a guarantee can be given that the errors, either of omission or commission, are not sufficient to disturb the correctness of the conclusions reached.

END OF VOLUME II.

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